

# The Son of Man

Studies in  
His Life and Teachings

GROSS ALEXANDER



PRESENTED BY

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# THE SON OF MAN:

## Studies in His Life and Teachings.

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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*DEDICATED*

WITH REVERENT AFFECTION TO THE  
MEMORY OF MY FATHER,  
CHARLES HOLLIDAY ALEXANDER,  
AND OF MY MOTHER,  
ELIZA DRANE ALEXANDER. /



## Prefatory Note.

THIS unpretending book was written at the suggestion and by the request of others. It is neither a life of Jesus, nor a treatise on his teachings, but consists of studies of some of the important phases of his life and teachings. The author prepared materials for other studies, but these were excluded by the limits of the book.

The treatment is intended to be popular, though the methods and results of critical study have not been ignored. Some of the papers have been given before public assemblies, and were prepared with that in view.

I have not hesitated to avail myself of the help of others, as the references in the body of the book will show. I am especially and deeply indebted to the great German scholars Keim, Weiss, and Wendt, and to the late lamented Dr. A. B. Bruce, of Scotland, though I have not been able to agree with them in all their

views. From Dr. Weiss I derived great assistance in the study of the sinlessness of Jesus. For a knowledge of the times and conditions, nothing is equal to the monumental work of Dr. Emil Schürer on "The History of the Jews in the Time of Christ." Much help was derived from it, especially in writing the first Study. To others credit is given where their works are quoted.

To the Rev. Dr. Jno. J. Tigert, the friend of my boyhood, and still more of my later years, I wish to express my thanks for his patient reading of manuscript and proofs, for many valuable suggestions, for the encouragement he has given me at every stage of the work, and for his kind and generous note of Introduction.

May the blessing of God, which has been sought in the preparation of these pages, be given in the reading of them, so that they may not have been written in vain.

*August 22, 1899.*



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## Introduction.

THE religion of Christendom, purified of the accretions of nineteen centuries, is an achievement of the consciousness of Jesus. Christianity is the ripe fruit of Christ's inner life. A man, not a book, was the organ of supreme divine revelation. The office of the criticism and theology of the New Testament, as applied to the Gospels, is to identify and describe this man; to fix his place in history; to measure, so far as this is possible, his divine altitude on the background of his own times, and by the ever-lengthening shadow he casts upon all subsequent times; to trace the course of his thought and determine its fundamental categories; to study the sources of the authority and permanency of his teaching; to attain to some comprehension of his unique intimacy with the Father; and to bring home to the hearts of the men of this generation the value which he himself attached to his life and to his death.

The man, rather than the record, has done the work. Criticism is a means to an end. It deals with documents, but its end is a Person and the facts of his life ; which were originally independent of any record, and may be made real to us of to-day. It begins with evidence and ends with history. The trend of theology in the closing decades of our century reveals the certain character of the theology of the century yet unborn : it will be biblical, historical, scientific ; it cannot be dogmatic, speculative, ecclesiastical. It will not undertake the solution of every problem in heaven and earth ; for it will recognize the rights and provinces of natural science and of psychology and philosophy. Its deepest appeal will be to the inalienable moral nature of man, "to every man's conscience in the sight of God" ; and it will be clothed in the terms of a transparent rationality. Its center and its circumference will be Christ.

The reconstruction in theology which the new methods are effecting, and will still more effect, does not proceed from any doubt of the truth of the Christian religion or any dissatis-



faction with its foundations. That truth is absolute, and those foundations are divine. Rather theologians have gained a new comprehension of the absoluteness, the vitality, the universality, and the divinity of Christ's religion; and because some of the old theologoumena contain these elements in such scant measure, scientific theology has given itself to the task of their enlargement and vivification; with Edwin Hatch we hear "the solemn tramp of the science of history marching in our day almost for the first time into the domain of Christian theology."

In this volume Professor Alexander makes the first contribution to biblical theology emanating from our ministry or Church; and a most noteworthy contribution it is. It is founded on exact and familiar knowledge of New Testament Greek; it shows an easy mastery of the principles of historical and documentary criticism; its author has saturated himself with the world's best literature relevant to his theme; the tone and spirit of the volume are reverent and deeply religious. Some of the "Studies," such as those on the Temptation, on the King-

dom of God and the Conditions of Membership therein, and the Daily Prayer of God's Child, have been to me the source of great spiritual illumination and peace. They are the ripest fruit of the expositor's genius, and superior to anything on the same topics I have seen. Each of the "Studies" possesses its own characteristic and fundamental importance, as students of current theology will readily recognize; but, among them, the chapters on the Self-consciousness of Jesus and on the Resurrection are worthy of special mention for the rigidly scientific and relatively exhaustive discussion of these vital topics, determinative of the universal and eternal significance of the Christian faith.

JNO. J. TIGERT.

NASHVILLE, 18 August, 1899.

THE SON OF MAN:  
STUDIES IN HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS.





## I.

### The Conditions and the Beginnings.

It is not always true that "the age makes the man," but it is true that a knowledge of the age does much to explain the man. In order to understand the life of one who has left his mark on his own and succeeding generations, it is necessary to know, as far as possible, the age in which he lived and the historical conditions in the midst of which his development took place, his message was delivered, and his work was done. Without such knowledge, much of what he did and said cannot be readily understood, and much is often sadly misunderstood; nor is it possible, without such knowledge, to estimate his influence and to measure the results of his life. On the other hand, a thorough knowledge of the conditions, of current modes of thought, of the character and relations of parties and their leaders, in short, of the in-

tellectual, moral, social, and political status of the people, will in many cases clear up what would be obscure and prevent misunderstanding. It will therefore be necessary at the outset to take a brief, summary survey of the conditions which obtained in the land of Palestine in the time of which we write.

The class of men who had most influence in determining the condition of the people of the Holy Land at the period in question was that of the so-called Scribes. This unfortunate translation, however, is quite misleading. For though they were originally copyists of the law, eventually they became the interpreters of the Scriptures and the doctors of the law.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of this class is probably to be

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<sup>1</sup>The Hebrew word means, according to Gesenius, "one skilled in the sacred books and in the law." The corresponding Greek word, γραμματεὺς, is defined by Thayer as follows: "In the Bible a man learned in the Mosaic law and in the sacred writings." Other words for the same class in the New Testament are νομοδιδάσκαλος = "teacher of the law"; νομικός = "one

found in the time of Ezra,<sup>1</sup> who “was a ready scribe (sopher) in the law of Moses, and who had prepared his heart to *teach* in Israel statutes and judgments.” (Ezra vii. 7, 10.) Ezra was, moreover, to “set magistrates and judges who were to judge the people and *teach* them the laws of God.” (Ezra vii. 25.) This was probably the beginning of that process of interpreting, expounding, and extending the law of Moses which continued, with perhaps some interruptions, to the time of Jesus, and which long before his time

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learned in the law”; *ῥαββί* = “my great and honorable master.” They were the interpreters, expounders, amplifiers, and judges of the law; and, if they continued in the time of Jesus to be copyists of the law, this was a comparatively insignificant part of their work. The German word expresses the meaning exactly, and avoids any suggestion of *scribe* in the sense of secretary or writer: *Schriftgelehrte* = “a man learned in the Scriptures.”

<sup>1</sup> Compare Schürer, *History of the Jews*, Div. II., vol. ii. 54.

had produced its legitimate results, one of which was that huge body of commentaries and casuistical definitions and extensions which was known in the time of Jesus as "the traditions of the elders." This was afterwards reduced to writing in that mass of rubbish which we now have as the Talmud, and which, with a gem here and there, remains, on the whole, a continent of mud. The appointment by Ezra of men who were to "teach the laws of God" was probably the germ out of which was developed that institution which was so universal in the days of Jesus and the apostles, and which exercised a deeper and more far-reaching influence than the temple itself with its solemn ritual—the synagogue. The synagogue was a school, a Sabbath school, where not the children alone, as in our modern Sunday schools, but all the people gathered together to listen to the reading, interpretation, and definition of the Scriptures by rabbis (scribes) trained in rabbin-

ical schools.<sup>1</sup> As Schürer has pointed out, "the professional employment of these so-called scribes referred, first and chiefly, to the law. Their task was a threefold one:

"1. The more careful theoretical development of the law itself." By this he means the development of the general precepts of the law by endless casuistical discussion, definition, and extension.

"2. The teaching of the law to their pupils.

"3. Its practical administration, *i. e.*, the rendering of legal decisions as learned assessors in courts of justice."<sup>2</sup>

For as the civil law of the Jews was embodied in their sacred scriptures, the rabbis were in fact jurists or lawyers, in the modern English sense of the word. It is not possible, without illustrations from the Talmud, to understand what absurd extremes they

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<sup>1</sup> Recall how Saul of Tarsus was trained under Gamaliel in the rabbinical school at Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Schürer, *History of the Jews*, Div. II., vol. i. 320.

went to in their "theoretical development" of the law.

An example may be found in connection with their rules and regulations concerning the observance of the Sabbath. The law of Moses only prohibited work on the Sabbath in a general way. The rabbis, however, undertook to define accurately and exhaustively what work was forbidden. They enumerate thirty-nine kinds of work that were included in the prohibition. One of these, to take an example, was the tying of a knot; another was the untying of a knot. But this was not definite enough. They must go further, and specify what kinds of a knot they were the tying or untying of which on the Sabbath rendered a man guilty, and what kinds did not. Then follows the enumeration of those kinds of knots which must not be and those which may be tied or untied on the Sabbath. So as to lighting a fire, writing a letter, bearing a burden, and endless other nothings.

But besides these thirty-nine *works*, many other *actions*, not properly classed as works, were forbidden.

Similar, but more minute and tedious still, were their ordinances concerning the objects and acts that rendered a man unclean. These consisted of casuistical extensions of the Mosaic ordinances concerning cleanness and uncleanness. The Levitical legislation defined the various kinds of animals that were clean or unclean;<sup>1</sup> it enumerated the symptoms and conditions connected with leprosy<sup>2</sup> that rendered a man unclean, as well as conditions connected with certain forms of sickness, and especially with the birth of children,<sup>3</sup> etc. It prescribes also the methods of purification by various washings and sacrifices. But ample as were these enactments, they are but poor and scanty compared with those found in the Talmud. No less than twelve treatises deal with matters pertaining to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lev. xi., Deut. xiv.    <sup>2</sup> Lev. xiii.    <sup>3</sup> Lev. xii.



law of cleanness and uncleanness. The enumeration of the chief kinds of uncleanness forms the basis of all these discussions. But with each of the chief kinds, each of the following questions had to be discussed and determined, with opinions of various rabbis on the points involved: (1) Under what circumstances such uncleanness is incurred; (2) In what manner and to what extent it may be transferred to others; (3) What objects and utensils are, and what are not, capable of contracting defilement by contact with an unclean object; (4) What means and regulations are prescribed for the removal of uncleanness. We give some examples of their answers to the last two questions: As to the kind of utensils that could contract defilement by contact with an unclean object, that was determined, first by the material of which these were composed, and secondly by their form, that is, whether hollow or flat. For example, in case of hollow earthen vessels

the air in them contracts uncleanness from an unclean object, as a corpse or a leper, and propagates it to any person or thing coming in contact with the vessel; but not the outside of such vessels. The purification of such vessels can be brought about only by their being broken, for then they can no longer contain the air which serves as a medium of holding and propagating the uncleanness. But to what extent must the breaking go in order to effect the purification of the vessel? An exact answer must be given to this question also. A fragment of a vessel is still esteemed a vessel, and therefore capable of contracting and propagating uncleanness. But how much of a fragment? That depends on the size of the original vessel. If it be the fragment of a vessel holding a log (about three and one-third gills), and the fragment be sufficiently large to hold enough for anointing the little toe with, then it is still capable of contracting and propagating uncleanness. There

are also similar prescriptions as to drinking-cups, tables, doors, bolts, knockers, hinges, keys, bridles, etc.

A few examples illustrating their way of answering the question concerning the ways and means of removing uncleanness may be given: First, they distinguished six kinds of water to be used in lustrations and purifications.

1. The water in ponds, cisterns or pits, is, if not defiled itself, suitable for the legal washing of the hands from contracted defilement.

2. Running spring water is suitable for the heave and for washing the hands.

3. Collected water amounting to forty seah (= one and three-fourths peck) may be used for a legal bath for oneself or for utensils.

4. A small spring with more water poured into it may also be used for purification.

5. Running water arising from mineral or warm springs may be used, notwith-

standing this fact, because it purifies itself in running.

6. Clean spring water. This is especially suitable for running sores and for the sprinkling of lepers.

These are the basis and starting point for yet further series of definitions and distinctions which lose themselves in endless detail.

Extremely minute also were the directions concerning the washing of the hands and the correct way of pouring on the hands. It was needful that the hands should *always* have water poured on them before eating. But it must be discussed and determined (1) from what vessels such pouring should take place; (2) what water was suitable for it; (3) who might pour it; (4) how much of the hands was to be poured on.<sup>1</sup> And so it was throughout. Under the bondage of the casuistical habit, and by

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<sup>1</sup> Passages like Mark vii. 2-23 will have new meaning in the light of these facts. These examples are given by Schürer, Div. II., vol. ii. 106 ff.

the application of the casuistical principle, "the law" was brought to bear upon every act and every most trivial detail of the daily life, and everything, essential or indifferent, moral or unmoral, was brought and kept under the insupportable bondage of this endless and senseless definition, distinction, restriction, and prohibition. "At every step, at the work of his calling, at prayer, at meals, at home and abroad, from early morning till the close of the day, from youth to old age, the dead formula followed the Israelite who was zealous for the law. Life was a continual torment to the earnest man, who felt at every moment that he was in danger of transgressing the law."<sup>1</sup> For ethics this Pharisaic rabbinism substituted casuistry; for principles, rules; for the spirit, the letter; for insight, authority; for worship, forms; for the word of God, a God-dishonoring tradition; for spirituality, the most absolute and

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<sup>1</sup>Schürer, Div. II., vol. ii. 125.

intricate externalism.<sup>1</sup> And if any attained proficiency in the knowledge and observance of these endless and burdensome prescriptions, their pride of self-righteousness and their conceit of superiority became inordinate.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, any man who ignored or transgressed these rules and ordinances was a lawbreaker and accursed, while any one who held and taught that they were not binding was a revolutionist and a traitor.

These rabbis required and received from their pupils the most absolute reverence, greater than that due to parents<sup>3</sup> and equal to that due to God. They claimed that their words were to be esteemed more highly than those of the prophets, and were more precious than the law itself. "My son," they

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<sup>1</sup> Gould's Commentary on Mark, p. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Pharisees in general. In particular, see Paul's autobiographical sketch in Philip-  
pians iii. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Mark vii. 10-13.

said, "be more careful about the teaching of the rabbis than about that of the law, and let your fear of the rabbi be like the fear of God." They were honored by God himself, and their praises were proclaimed by the angels in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The important fact for those who would understand the life of Jesus is that in his lifetime these rabbis (scribes) formed a firmly compacted class who were in practically undisputed possession of spiritual supremacy over the people.

The Pharisees were not the same as the scribes or rabbis. The Pharisees were a religious and theological party, while the rabbis had an official status as the "teachers in Israel," though as a matter of fact many of the scribes were of the Pharisaic party.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edersheim, *Life and Times of the Messiah*, I. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Mark ii. 16, Revised Version: "And the scribes *of* the Pharisees"; Luke v. 30: "The Pharisees and *their* scribes," *i. e.*, the scribes who were of *their* party.



But a man could be a Pharisee without being a rabbi (scribe), and a man could be a rabbi (scribe) without being a Pharisee. The Pharisees were those who seriously and consistently strove to carry out in practice the ideal of a legal life set up by the rabbis.<sup>1</sup> They practiced and preached that minute and servile legalism and literalism which under the influence of the rabbis were the determining and dominating characteristics of the whole development of the people of Israel in the period between their return from the exile and the birth of Jesus. The Pharisaic party was distinguished from the mass of the people only by its greater strictness and consistency.<sup>2</sup> That they were thus distinguished from the mass of the people is implied in the word Pharisee, which means a "separatist." But though they thus separated themselves from the common people, and from their level of

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<sup>1</sup> Schürer, Div. II., vol. ii. 10.   <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

superiority looked down on them, it was by reason of this very sanctity and religious superiority that they had such influence over the people. Practically, they held almost absolute sway in the nation, both religiously and politically.

Even their political views were accepted and followed by the mass of the people, while in matters of religion they simply dictated to the people their doctrines and their observances.<sup>1</sup> According to Josephus, there were six thousand of them, and there was a practically unbroken solidarity among them.

The Sadducees represented the priesthood, and by reason of the historical continuity and prestige of that class they were the aristocrats of the nation. They were thus removed from the common people, but in such a way as to have little influence with them. In theology and religion they

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, Ant. XVIII. i. 3.

represented a revolt from the doctrines and practices of the Pharisees and rabbis. They adhered to the law of Moses and rejected the accumulated additions and traditions of the latter class.<sup>1</sup> Finding nothing clear, as they thought, in the law of Moses concerning the resurrection or a future life, they denied both.

They held that God had very little to do with this world, that men were free and able to do right or wrong, as they chose, and that they were practically independent of God. They held that man's aim and end are limited to this world. The highest good and the true destiny of this existence are to be sought in a pleasant life, in riches and honor, in avoiding punishment by acting justly and showing a placable disposition, in leaving a posterity, and in dying without hope or fear for soul or body.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the

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<sup>1</sup>Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Hippolytus, quoted by Keim, "Jesus of Nazara," I. 360.

Pharisees, they were not interested in a kingdom of God. There was no need of a future King and a Messianic renovation and revolution. So long as man lived uprightly and enjoyed rationally, this life was happy enough.<sup>1</sup> They were satisfied to be let alone. Their only care was to hold their rank and position and to do nothing that would provoke their mighty masters, the "Romans, to come and take away their place and nation," as they bluntly put it.<sup>2</sup> If any man did anything to bring them into this peril, he was either a fanatic or a traitor; and in either case it was the most elementary dictate of common sense, as well as the simplest rule of statesmanship, that this one should be sacrificed for the many.<sup>3</sup> Not only did most of them acquiesce in the rule of the Romans, some of them even supported the claims and the policy of the Herods, and are called "He-

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<sup>1</sup>Keim, I. 361. <sup>2</sup>John xi. 48. <sup>3</sup>John xi. 50.

rodians" in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> They were not unfriendly to the culture of the Greeks, and did not refuse to adopt Greek customs and names. Thus they were in every particular the very antithesis of the Pharisees. But they were few in number, and were overshadowed in every way by the Pharisees. There is a passage in Josephus which shows clearly the ascendancy and supremacy of the latter class as compared with the Sadducees. "As to the Sadducees, nothing really is effected by them. For when they come into any official position they follow, though unwillingly and by constraint, what the Pharisees say, since otherwise the multitude does not tolerate them."<sup>2</sup>

Long before the time of the New Testament, the power of the Pharisees had grown so great that they did not hesitate to resist their own kings. In one instance they led the people in revolt from Alexander

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<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 6 and xii. 13. <sup>2</sup> Josephus, Ant. XVIII. i. 4.

Jannæus, a prince of the heroic and famous Maccabean family, who was king from 104 B.C. to 78 B.C. They prolonged the fight for six long and bitter years, though it was at the cost of the lives of more than fifty thousand of their adherents. At last he succeeded in overmastering them, though not in conquering them, and on his deathbed Alexander advised his wife and successor to yield to them. She did so. And, as Josephus says, "though she had the name of regent, yet the Pharisees had the authority. For they restored such as had been banished and set at liberty such as were prisoners, and in short they differed in nothing from lords. She also restored again those usages which the Pharisees practiced according to the traditions of their forefathers, and she required the people to be obedient to them."<sup>1</sup>

This conflict at once illustrates their solidarity and reveals their temper toward any

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, Ant. XIII. xvi. 2.

man of whatever rank or title or power or quality that would dare to question their right to lead the people in matters of religion. Politically the Pharisees were opposed with all the fierce intensity of their natures, strengthened by the most bitter race prejudice and a fiery and fanatical religious zeal, to the rule of a foreign and Gentile power over the land and people of God; and they clung with the tenacity of desperation to the expectation of a Messiah and a Messianic kingdom as their last hope.

But the Messiah they waited for must be the Messiah of their sort, conforming to their views, confirming their traditions, and adopting their policy. And woe to the pretender who should, by opposing their views, setting aside their traditions, and rejecting their policy, attempt to lead the people away from them. Their history had revealed a temper and a tenacity that would oppose him to the death, whoever and whatever he might be.

Besides these leading classes and the great mass of the common people, there were two other classes, who, in opposite directions, were removed from the influence of the ruling castes.

There were the social outcasts, the sinners who had abandoned themselves to lives of open immorality and sensuality; and, with these, the publicans, those traitors who for hire lent themselves to the service of the hated Gentile power that held in subjection the elect people of Jehovah. Over against these was the small remnant of devout souls, for the most part in the homes of the lowly, who, wearied with the endless, cumbrous and meaningless comments of the teachers of the Scriptures, turned from them to seek in the Scriptures themselves spiritual comfort and guidance, who in the mood and attitude of faith and patience and hope were waiting for the consolation of Israel.

So far as the heathen world was con-



cerned, their condition was no better; it was perhaps worse. We can give only a general and summary view. If we could transport ourselves backward two thousand years into the midst of the Roman empire in the days of Augustus Cæsar; if we could blot out the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament; if we could erase from our minds the memory of the portrait and the person of Jesus, and all recollection of his words, his teachings, and his life, and all knowledge of the noble ideals of character and the noble characters of history that have been formed under his creative inspiration—in short, if we could put ourselves in the moral and intellectual condition of the Romans of the Augustan age, we should be sure of none of the great truths concerning God and man and duty and destiny which are now the common property of all men.

Nature was an impenetrable mystery; man, an inexplicable enigma; truth, a mat-

ter of philosopher's guess; virtue, a blind and uncertain risk; and death, at once the refutation and extinction of hope. Darkness seemed to cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples.

But it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled for taxation. And from a rural town that hung on a slope of one of the hills of the obscure land of Galilee, a young Jewish woman of the peasant class accompanied her husband, probably on foot, to a town in the southern province of Judea, that they might be enrolled in the district to which their family belonged. There, somewhere in the vicinity of the ancient town of Bethlehem, in circumstances of deep poverty and painful humiliation, was born, of that young woman, the helpless babe that was to grow up into the Prophet of Nazareth, the Man of Galilee, who should touch and renovate the decaying world, and revolutionize the moral con-

dition and history of mankind. Returning after a time to their lowly home in the heart of the hills of central Galilee, the Boy grew in the quiet seclusion of this remote retreat. And when consciousness was born, there was born with it in the clear, calm depths of his pure soul *the* consciousness that God was his Father.<sup>1</sup> This consciousness remained throughout, the one determinative element of his inner life and thought, the one regulative principle of all his revelations and all his actions. It was the heart of the truth which "came by Jesus Christ." This truth he apprehended not for himself alone, but as man for man, as human for humanity. It was truth which humanity had never apprehended before, which, in Jesus' sense, had never been realized by any human being. God had been variously conceived by

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<sup>1</sup>This was not, could not have been, taught him by his mother, for when he referred to God as his Father in his twelfth year, "they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." (Luke ii. 50.)

men, now as one, now as many, now as distinct from the world, now as one with the world, now as the author and operator of the forces of nature, now as their subject and victim. By some the Divinity was conceived as the natural adversary of men, wantonly inflicting innumerable evils upon them, enjoying with demonic malignity their suffering and sorrow and bent on their ultimate destruction. "As flies to wanton boys, so are we to the gods; they torture us for sport." By others the Divinity was conceived as so absorbed in concerns of his own as to be wholly indifferent to the weal or woe of the race of mortal men. The highest conception attained concerning God, with an individual exception here and there, was that of absolute and autocratic sovereign and moral governor, exacting a servile obedience from men, and meting out to offenders and delinquents their due penalties with the inexorableness of fate, the precision of rabbinical calculation, and the pitilessness of a

divine Shylock. But to Jesus God was not God only, he was also Father. This truth he declared, he reiterated, he magnified, he illustrated in his own spirit and life, he vitalized and energized with all the force and beauty of his own unique personality. It was his mission to give to humanity this conception of God and the motives for receiving it, and to reveal to them the *way* of realizing it, with all that it meant for humanity. His new doctrine, unfolded in his teachings and illustrated in his life, has filled the world with light. What the world knows to-day of God and what the world knows of man in his relation to God more than was known in the Augustan age, or any age, the world has learned from Mary's Son.

## II.

### The Supernatural Birth of Jesus.

WE have in the New Testament two independent accounts of the birth of Jesus from a virgin mother, and apart from these accounts it is not elsewhere mentioned. We concern ourselves first with an examination of the historicity of these two accounts.

In the first place, the circumstances attending the birth are recorded at considerable length and with considerable fullness of detail by the most painstaking historical writer of the New Testament—the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles. He exhibits the historical sense and employs the historical method. In a preface to his Gospel, which has always been admired for its dignified common sense, its comprehensive description of the true method of historical research, and its literary

balance and beauty, he modestly but distinctly declares of himself that in collecting the materials for his history, so far from picking up floating reports, he had *traced the course*<sup>1</sup> of things, that he had traced the course of things *from the beginning*,<sup>2</sup> that he had traced the course of *all*<sup>3</sup> things from the beginning, that he had traced the course of all things *accurately*<sup>4</sup> from the beginning. The expression, “from the beginning,” interpreted in the light of the first two chapters of his Gospel, clearly means that he had extended his painstaking research to the circumstances preceding and attending the birth of Jesus, and gives explicit assurance that we have the same guarantee of thoroughness in the investigation of his sources there as elsewhere.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Luke’s opportunities for know-

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<sup>1</sup> παρακολουθεῖν. <sup>2</sup> ἀνωθεν. <sup>3</sup> πᾶσιν. <sup>4</sup> ἀκριβῶς.

<sup>5</sup>The International Critical Commentary on Luke gives this critical estimate of Luke’s veracity: “In spite of the severest scrutiny, his accuracy can very rarely be impugned.” Plummer on Luke, page 4.

ing were of the best. He got his knowledge from persons who had been "eyewitnesses."<sup>1</sup> His incidental remark that Mary "kept all these things in her heart"<sup>2</sup> probably indicates the ultimate source whence his knowledge of the birth of Jesus was derived. At any rate, we know that the mother of Jesus survived him, and doubtless so conscientious and painstaking an investigator as Luke's preface indicates, would naturally search out and avail himself of information that had been derived from the mother of Jesus herself.

The character of the passage itself, also, is worthy of attention. It has been well and beautifully said with reference to both the New Testament accounts: "The story of the birth and infancy is told in the first and third Gospels with a simple grace that excels the most perfect art. Its theme, hardly to be handled without being depraved, is touched with the most exquisite

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<sup>1</sup> ἀντόπται. Luke i. 2.    <sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 51.



delicacy. The veil where it ought to conceal does not reveal. . . . There is as little trace of a coarse or prurient as of an inventive or amplifying faculty. The reticence is much more remarkable than the speech. Indeed, the distinction between history and legend could not be better marked than by the reserve of the canonical and the vulgar tattle of the apocryphal Gospels. . . . Our narratives are pure as the air that floats above the eternal hills; are full, too, of an idyllic sweetness like the breath of summer when it comes laden with the fragrance of garden and field.”<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, we find in the Gospel of Matthew another account of the divine generation of Jesus. The striking and important thing is not that we have a second account of the virgin birth, but that this account is totally independent of the other, agreeing with it in nothing but the single central fact that Jesus was conceived by

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<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, page 31.

the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary. Matthew gives no hint of the annunciation to Mary, but tells only of revelations made to Joseph. Luke says nothing of the revelations made to Joseph, but speaks only of what pertained to Mary. From Matthew's account it would seem that Joseph did not know of the announcements made to Mary, but that he became acquainted with the situation in some other way. And yet it is difficult to conceive that Mary would not tell him of these announcements in order to exonerate herself from blame. "Every motive of honor, of duty, and of prudence would have constrained Mary to communicate these announcements to her betrothed at once," says Beyschlag. While this is true, it may well be that Joseph's mind was still so troubled that he needed, in addition to Mary's account, the divine message in order to remove the last shadow of "fear."<sup>1</sup> The fact that he did after-

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. i. 20: "*Fear* not to take unto thee Mary thy wife."

wards take her as his wife, notwithstanding the pain of the situation, lends strong confirmation to the account given by Matthew that by means of a revelation from God himself Joseph was assured of the divine decree concerning Mary.

So far then are the accounts of Matthew and Luke from being irreconcilable, it is only on the assumption of their legendary character that their differences cannot be explained. For if the supernatural conception of Jesus was an invention and not a fact, different accounts of it would be likely to have a general agreement, or at the very least to have something in common, unless it be assumed that there were two original and independent inventions of the same thing, which is altogether improbable. But if the supernatural conception did take place, it is neither impossible nor perhaps improbable that everything took place which both Matthew and Luke record. In the absence of any actual contradiction in the two

accounts, their total independence of each other and their difference in every detail render each one more rather than less probable.

Moreover, we cannot find any motive for invention here. The story of the supernatural conception of Jesus could not have been invented in order to conform either to Old Testament prophecy or to current opinion among the Jews as to the manner of Messiah's birth. The prophecy of Isaiah<sup>1</sup> to which Matthew<sup>2</sup> refers was never before supposed to refer to the Messiah. Moreover, the word used by Isaiah, and translated "virgin," by no means refers exclusively to an unmarried person, and there is no proof that the Jews, even in the passage in question, understood it to mean a virgin mother. It is interpreted here by Gesenius to mean "a youthful spouse, a wife recently married, the primary idea of this word not being that of unspotted virginity, so that it

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. vii. 14.    <sup>2</sup> Matt. i. 22.

is incorrectly rendered in the Septuagint by *παρθένος*, nor does it primarily signify the unmarried state.”<sup>1</sup> In the case of Matthew, it was the fact of the miraculous birth of Jesus that suggested to him the prophecy (as given in the Septuagint), and not the prophecy that induced him to fabricate a story of the miraculous birth. We know how again and again Matthew finds in the events of the life of Jesus fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies.

As to current opinion on this subject among the Jews, it has been well said, “Of the miraculous birth of the Messiah, Jewish expectations at the time of Jesus afford not a trace.” It was foreign to their thought. Indeed, there was a large section of the Jews who accepted Jesus as Messiah and became Christians, but who persistently refused to accept the story of his birth. These were the Ebionites, and they were more distinctively Jewish than other Jewish Christians, holding on to Judaism

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<sup>1</sup> Gesenius, Heb. Lex.

while accepting Christianity, and they furnish perhaps the best index of current Jewish opinion and belief on this subject in the time of Christ.

We have direct testimony also that the miraculous birth of Messiah was not held by the Jews. In Justin Martyr's work called "The Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew," the latter adduces the alleged miraculous birth of Jesus as one of the points at variance with Jewish belief concerning Messiah, saying, "For we all expect that the Messiah will be born a man from men."<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus is even more explicit. In a passage giving an outline of what the Jews held concerning their Messiah, he says: "They say that the Messiah will be born from the family of David, not from a virgin and the Holy Ghost, but from a woman and a man, as it is appointed to all men to be born from

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<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, ch. 49: Καὶ γὰρ πάντες ἡμεῖς τὸν χριστὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γενήσεσθαι. Christian Literature Translation, page 219.

seed.”<sup>1</sup> The supernatural conception of Messiah was, then, contrary to Jewish belief in the time of Jesus; they knew nothing of it; it was a difficulty and an offense to them. Jewish Christians would hardly have *invented* a story concerning Jesus which would make it more difficult for their fellow-Jews to accept him.

Scarcely less difficult is it to account for the invention of the story on the ground of dogmatic motives or preconceptions. In other words, it is difficult to discover any theological reason for the invention of it.

As a matter of fact, no theological use is made of it in the New Testament. It is not mentioned or alluded to in any book or by any speaker or writer of the New Testament except Matthew and Luke. What is more to the point is that no theological use is made of it in the writings of the age fol-

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<sup>1</sup> Refutation of All Heresies, p. 138, edition of the Christian Literature Company.

lowing the New Testament. That is, it is not adduced as a proof of the divinity of Jesus or as an explanation of his character. It would seem that a theological motive that would lead men to go so far as to manufacture a story of this sort would also lead them to make some use of the story. But the allusions to the miraculous birth of Jesus in the post-apostolic age are few and meager, and not of the nature of argument for his divinity, but only passing references.<sup>1</sup> Neither in the New Testament nor in the post-apostolic writings is the sinlessness of Jesus, though everywhere taught or implied, made to depend on the miraculous birth; it is not explained by it; it is not connected with it. Nor is the doctrine of his divinity mentioned in connection with the miraculous birth.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples may be found in Ignatius's Epistle to the Ephesians, chapters vii. and xviii.; to the Smyr-næans, chapter i.; Justin Martyr, Apology I. 46; Dial. with Trypho, chapter 45. All referred to in Keim, II. 45, 46.



Not only is there no theological reason for inventing the story of his birth from a virgin, and no theological use made of it, there is apparently one very strong reason against it. For if Jesus had not a human father, thus sharing with all men a true and full human heredity, but was the product of an immediate divine paternity, it is difficult to see how he was truly human, a man among men, and subject to truly human conditions, as the Gospels consistently describe him. And especially is it difficult to understand how he endured temptation as real as those to which men are subjected, as both the Gospels and the Epistles represent. In fact, this remains till now one of the greatest difficulties in the life of Jesus—how to reconcile his divine paternity with his genuine and true humanity, and with the statement that he was tempted in all points like as we are.<sup>1</sup> The fact, then, that the significance of the miraculous birth was not

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<sup>1</sup> See the chapter on the Temptation.

made known by those who recorded it, and has never yet been fully and perfectly adjusted to other facts recorded by them, is a presumption in favor of the veracity of their narratives. Without any outside motive that we can discover, they simply wrote down the facts as they got them from their sources.

One of the greatest, ablest, and most critical scholars of this or any century, a man free from all the trammels of traditionalism and orthodoxy, who rejects the Christology of Paul and John, who handles the records of the life of Jesus without reserve and without critical mercy, who regards the story of his miraculous birth as unhistorical and untrue, and who summarily rejects the doctrine of his preëxistence, thus expresses his conviction as to the life and character of Jesus: "There are points in this life which far transcend at once all the attainments and all the consciousness of those who have been the soundest and the

most signally commissioned links in the chain of humanity, and hence at the same time *transcend that chain itself*. It is a whole, a full, a blameless life, no piece-work, no mixture of the lofty and the base; it is a divine creation, in full force, of largest love; for it is the completion of man as man, the issuing of the creation into the being of the Creator. It is the realized ideal of God in his creation.”<sup>1</sup> He continues: “As little are we able to refrain from the acknowledgment that in the person of Jesus a higher human organization was called into being by that *creative will of God* that runs in parallel though viewless course side by side with processes of creaturely procreation. If it must have a name, it can bear no better one than that which Paul found for it at the outset, a new creation in mankind,<sup>2</sup> a consummation, a desensualization, a spiritualization, a deification of the god-

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, II. 63, 66.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Paul's view of Christ as second Adam.

like image. It is more than a creation; it is a divine formation in humanity of his own being's kin and his own being's like, a coming of the essential Godhead to men.<sup>1</sup> . . . And we should not yet do full justice to the greatness of Jesus if we did not distinguish *the creative action of God in his person* from every other (creative action) in point of energy, and so far ultimately, *in kind as well, as something by itself and special.*"<sup>2</sup> Here then is a man who, by the demands of mere reason, apart from faith, feels, and is constrained to admit, that some special immediate creative act of God is necessary to account for the life of Jesus. Others have felt the same thing. Thus much, in view of the facts, reason demands. We find here, then, in this unconstrained conclusion of a free-thinking mind, a suggestion of the meaning of the supernatural conception, and it carries us a long way toward the discovery of its significance. For after all,

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<sup>1</sup> Keim, II. 66. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

there is no great distance or difference between the special creative act of God, considered by Keim to be necessary to account for the life of Jesus, and that action of God to which his birth is attributed in the chaste and beautiful story of Matthew and Luke. Approaching it from this outside and independent point of view, we find that the supernatural conception is credible, and even reasonable; and when we find it also historically well attested, there is no good reason why we should refuse to believe it or hesitate to accept it.

While this is true, and while it is true that to many minds acceptance of the supernatural birth makes faith easier because it supplies an explanation of the unique person, character, life, and teachings of Jesus, yet on the other hand there are earnest minds to whom belief in the physical miracle is more difficult than belief in the moral miracle. If these, yielding to the power of the latter, accept and comply with the teachings

of Jesus and specifically with the conditions of entrance into his kingdom and his standard of righteousness, they are not excluded from discipleship. John and Paul and Peter have left on record the gospel which they preached, the conditions of salvation as they expounded them, with their interpretation of the content of faith; and yet they have not mentioned the supernatural birth of Jesus. Jesus himself preached the gospel and expounded the way of salvation with higher authority than they, and yet he did not refer to his supernatural birth in the course of his ministry.

### III.

#### **The Baptism and Its Meaning.**

WHEN Jesus came to the consciousness of Messiahship, and how; whether it was by a gradual process or all at once and suddenly; these are questions that have been the subjects of long and earnest study and much discussion. The latter view is thus lucidly and strongly stated by one of its ablest defenders:

“Jesus from childhood was clearly sensible of the fatherly love of God and of his own filial relationship to God, and he remained faithful to that early assurance. Hence we can well conceive how Jesus, when he ripened into manhood, possessed a clearly thought-out general view of the normal relation of man to God. But at that earlier time he was not aware of the relation of this conception of his to the setting up of the long-expected kingdom of God. He

shared in the national hopes based on the Holy Scriptures, and from his own special way of reading and understanding them, as well as from his own experience of what constituted the highest blessedness, he formed, in contrast to the ideals prevalent among his countrymen, his idea of the essential elements of the blessedness of the latter-day dispensation. But the knowledge that he was called of God to be the Messiah of the new kingdom did not lie ready to hand for him long before he entered on his Messianic work. It did not develop itself in him by a gradual process of reflection, but . . . it came to him suddenly and unexpectedly through a miraculous revelation. Jesus received this revelation, which awakened his Messianic consciousness, when he was responding to the call of the Baptist to the Jewish people to prepare for the approach of the kingdom of God.”<sup>1</sup>

This view is held by other contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt's Teaching of Jesus, I. 96, 97.



German scholars,<sup>1</sup> and by some American writers.<sup>2</sup> While possibly this view may be correct, it is attended with difficulties which seem to us to render it improbable. According to the idyllic sketch in our third Gospel, at the age of twelve years Jesus gives expression to a calm, clear, unclouded consciousness that God was his Father. We learn also from the same passage that at that tender age his understanding was such as to astonish the wise and learned men of Jerusalem (Luke ii. 47), and that from this period, and with this pure consciousness of Sonship and this astonishing insight, he advanced in wisdom and in the favor of God. (Luke ii. 52.) The continuousness of this advance is indicated by the imperfect tense which is here used.<sup>3</sup> With his quick and penetrating insight he must have observed, with sadness and sorrow,

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<sup>1</sup>As Baldensperger and Beyschlag.

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert, in *Student's Life of Jesus*.

<sup>3</sup>Προέκοπτεν.

the fact and the effects of sin among the people with whom he was daily associated, and contrasted it with his own perfect purity and tranquillity of heart and life. Whence came this contrast, and what was its meaning? he must have asked.

He was profoundly versed in the Old Testament Scriptures which contained predictions and descriptions of the Messianic kingdom that was to come, and his after teachings incidentally reveal how well he was acquainted with the current expectation (and misapprehension) of that kingdom. And as it is not easy to see how he could have failed to be aware of the wide contrast between his own religious experience and moral condition and that of the people about him, so he must have observed the almost equally wide contrast between current interpretations of Old Testament prophecy and his own, between current views of Messiah's kingdom and his views. The fact that he had the true view

of both, and that he found no one else who did, not even among the wisest men of his time, must have brought home to him the suggestion, if not the realization, that he was a unique person; and this would lead to further reflection and inquiry.

Further, if he was such a person and had such unique knowledge of the deeper meaning of the Scriptures and the higher possibilities of men as the children of God, which is admitted by all, how is it to be explained that he was content to remain quietly and idly in retirement and obscurity in a far inland mountain town for thirty years or more and not go forth to give the sinful and sorrowful world the benefit of his knowledge and experience? To do this is the universal and irrepressible impulse of the good man who sees with sadness the sin and sorrow of the world, and who himself knows the secret of freedom and peace. Why did not Jesus do this? How could he keep from it for these long years?

If we understand that he was conscious

of a great mission, a unique mission to the world, and was awaiting the definite direction of his Father as to the time of his manifestation, this long season of waiting in obscurity becomes intelligible. Otherwise not. To one of Jesus' character without this unique consciousness, waiting in inactivity for long years and "hiding his light under a bushel" must appear as an unjustifiable and immoral remissness and waste.

In general, it is far more than likely that Jesus knew from his mother of the extraordinary nature and circumstances of his birth. This seems to be implied, particularly in the answer he gave to her at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, when she hinted to him that he might afford relief in the emergency which arose on that occasion. The whole conversation seems to indicate that they both understood and had probably talked together of his earlier history.

The knowledge which Jesus had of the manifestation and preaching of the Baptist,

and especially of his proclamation of the presence of the Messiah in the midst of the people, would mightily confirm his consciousness derived from the sources just enumerated. Indeed, we are not left merely to infer that Jesus understood the meaning of John's mission and its relation to himself.

On one of the days when John was baptizing the people in the river Jordan, Jesus presented himself for baptism. Fearless and relentless as John had been in denouncing sin, in rebuking sinners of all classes, and in demanding repentance of all, from the least to the greatest, his confidence and his courage failed when he looked upon Jesus. Overawed in his presence, he said in humility and meekness, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and yet dost thou come to me?" The reply of Jesus implies that he fully recognized the difficulty and incongruity which John saw and felt, and yet in order to fulfill what corresponded with the will of God, that was to be allowed which

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seemed incongruous and could not be comprehended at the time: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." What I ask is to be conceded for the present without your being able to understand it.

But how did Jesus' baptism fulfill all righteousness and accomplish the will of God? What was the reason for his being baptized by John, and what was the significance of this baptism for Jesus?

The baptism of Jesus at his own request could not mean that he was conscious of moral failure or wrong. For he did not deny John's assumption of his superiority to him and his baptism. On the contrary, his reply shows that he was perfectly aware of the difficulty which caused John's hesitation and which there really was in his submitting to the baptism of John.

If, then, Jesus was not aware of his Messiahship, we cannot discover any reason for his submitting to John's baptism. If there

was not something in his consciousness which called for his baptism apart from sin and repentance, there was no reason for his baptism at all. But if there *was* something in his consciousness apart from sin and repentance which prompted his desire for baptism, that something must have been in connection with his Messiahship. If not, what was it? When he says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," he meant that it was in accordance with and in obedience to the will of God, of which, it is implied, he in some way had had a token.

The life of Jesus after his baptism, says Weiss, differed from his life before only by its being dedicated from that time forward to his great divine calling. It was in this sense that Jesus saw in the command of God summoning him to baptism *the long-expected token* from his Father that the time was come for entering upon his Messianic career.<sup>1</sup> For the sinful people,

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<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Life of Christ*, I. 323.

baptism was to mark the conclusion of their life of sin and the beginning of a new life of righteousness; for Jesus, the sinless one, it marked the close of his former life of privacy and inactivity and his entrance upon one that was entirely new, namely, the life and work of the Messiah. This was probably the object and meaning of his baptism.



#### IV.

### The Equipment of Jesus.

AT the time when in obedience to his Father's will Jesus broke with his former life of retirement and inactivity and dedicated himself to his great divine calling, he received from his Father an objective testimony of recognition as Messiah and as Son of God, confirming his own subjective convictions and approving his act of self-dedication to the Messianic mission. This objective confirmation and authentication came to him in the very act of submission to baptism, when the voice declared, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."<sup>1</sup> But more than this, there came the equipment for the office and work of Messiah in the descent of the Spirit, objectively symbolized by the dove. It was

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<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 11.

through the agency of this Holy Spirit, and not by virtue of his divine nature, that the New Testament Scriptures represent him as having supernatural knowledge and exercising supernatural power. According to these Scriptures his supernatural knowledge, as exhibited on particular occasions, and his power to work miracles, were due to the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon him by his Father for the accomplishment of his Messianic work.

We read in Luke iv. 14 that immediately after the temptation Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. This means that he returned from the Jordan into Galilee invested or clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> And this was at the very beginning of his ministry. Again, not very long after this, it is said (Luke v. 17), "The power of the Lord

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<sup>1</sup>The preposition here used for *in* expresses investiture, and is used in this sense in the New Testament again and again.

[that is, Jehovah] was with him to heal.” In another of the Gospels, Jesus himself says that he cast out demons by the Spirit of God. (Matt. xii. 28.)

In some instances it appears that he prayed before working a miracle, as in the case of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis (Mark vii. 34). In Matthew xxvi. 53 we find him saying, “Thinkest thou that I could not *beseech* my Father, and he shall now send me more than twelve legions of angels?” From this it appears that even miracles he did not work, *might* have been wrought on condition of his *praying* for it. Again, he says in John xi. 41, 42, what implies that he offered special prayer for the power to perform what seems to us his greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Not only so, it seems to imply that he was in the habit of asking his Father for power to work miracles. These are his words as he stands beside the grave: “Father, I thank thee that thou heardest

me. And I knew that thou hearest me *always.*” This fact is recorded of him, let us remember, in the fourth Gospel, which is recognized as in advance of the others in its representations of the divinity of Jesus. And, further, it is in this fourth Gospel that Jesus is represented as saying of himself that the works which he did his Father *had given* him to accomplish. (John v. 36.) In John ix. 3, 4 he speaks of his miraculous works as the works of God, of him who had sent him. In John xiv. 10 he says, “But the Father abiding in me doeth his works.” And in general, we are told that God giveth the Spirit to him not by measure. (John iii. 34.) This view, that Jesus performed his miracles in virtue of his investiture with the Holy Spirit by God the Father, is the one held and taught by the apostles after the wonderful illumination of Pentecost. Peter so understands it; for he says, on that occasion, to the Jews, that Jesus was a man

approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs which *God did by him* in their midst. (Acts ii. 22.) And again, at the house of Cornelius, he says that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power. (Acts x. 38.)

That this is the scriptural view of the supernatural power and the supernatural knowledge of Jesus, has been discovered and is now held even by conservative students of his life. On this point Dr. James Stalker, an orthodox, evangelical, and spiritual preacher of Scotland, says: "We are in the habit of attributing the wisdom and grace of his words, his supernatural knowledge of even the thoughts of men, as well as the miracles he performed, to his divine nature. But in the Gospels they are constantly attributed to the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> And this scriptural view will suggest, if it does not furnish, an explanation of some

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<sup>1</sup> Stalker's *Life of Christ*, p. 44.

things which it is otherwise difficult to understand. It may afford us a glimpse into the reason why in some cases Jesus *could* not do many mighty works. It will also reconcile for us the supernatural knowledge of Jesus with those limitations of his knowledge which are either expressly declared, or, as is more frequently the case, implied, in the records of his life and teachings. In general, it will enable us in reading the Gospels to see and accept that we are reading the life of a man, the life of a truly human person, who, in interpreting and describing himself, designated himself habitually as the Son of man. While we must not lose sight of the fact that, according to these same Scriptures, Jesus was in a true sense divine, his life as recorded in the Gospels is the life of a man, albeit a man who was filled with the Spirit of God, a man who was, from the beginning to the end of his life, absolutely at one with God.

## V.

### The Test in the Desert.

“Is he then the Son of God who desires to be nothing but the instrument of the divine will, and who will *use what is given him only* that he may accomplish the work which his Father has given him to do?” His subjection to the experiences of the wilderness furnishes the test of this. If he had been a wooden man, if the whole course of his life had been a mere stage-play process, the test which he passed through in the wilderness had been unnecessary; unless, indeed, this so-called temptation also was one of the acts in the play. But if he was man in the full sense, with “nothing human alien to him,” then we can see the necessity and understand the meaning of this test. We can discover the wisdom of God in subjecting him to it before his entrance upon the actual work of his mission. At the same time, we can understand also why

he himself, conscious of his destination to a mission, and at the point of entering on a work, never before assigned to a son of man, would crave retirement and solitude for realizing and accepting the full meaning of it. He was thoroughly acquainted with the contents of the Old Testament Scriptures. He was thoroughly familiar with the records of the lives of God's servants, the prophets. He knew what they had been called to do, what opposition they had encountered, what perils they had braved, what sufferings they had endured, and what fates they had met, in the doing of it.<sup>1</sup> And he knew that his work was greater than theirs, infinitely more difficult, and fraught with infinitely greater suffering. Not only so, he dwells with painful fre-

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<sup>1</sup> He refers again and again to the persecutions and sufferings of the prophets. Matt. v. 12: "For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." See also Matt xxiii. 30-35 (which should be read in full), and other passages of similar import.



quency during the course of his teaching on the sufferings of Messiah himself, as foretold or foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Man as he was, and humanly agitated with the tumult of emotions that must have arisen within him on the threshold of his untested task, he might well desire to flee away into an impenetrable solitude for comprehending it and adjusting himself to it.<sup>1</sup> While this is natural to Jesus, we are told by Matthew that he was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit in order to be subjected to temptation by the evil spirit. However, there is no inconsistency here. Either the Holy Spirit may have influenced him through his natural impulses, or may have imparted a distinct impulse over and above these. It is not said, nor is it implied in what is said, that Jesus knew beforehand

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly Paul, when the revelation came to him that revolutionized him, sought retirement amid the solitudes of Arabia for introspection, meditation, and intelligent adjustment to his new conditions.

that he was going to be subjected to this process of *temptation by the devil*.

While this temptation was a test whether Jesus desired to be nothing but the instrument of the divine will and would use what was given him only that he might accomplish his Father's work, at the same time it would give him a foretaste of the temptations he would have to resist and acquaint him experimentally with the forces he would have to encounter and overcome in completing that work. The testing was thus also a preparation for the mission which he was to fulfill.

In thinking of the three specific temptations that are recorded in detail, we should not lose sight of the fact that, according to two of the accounts, he was under temptation during the whole period of the forty days.<sup>1</sup> What this prolonged temptation or

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<sup>1</sup> Πειραζόμενος τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ: Mark i. 13. See also Luke iv. 2, who uses exactly the same words except one—*διαβόλου*.

these repeated<sup>1</sup> temptations were, we do not know, we can only try to imagine. At any rate, we can try to imagine how painful, how awful, how exhausting the process must have been, continuing, as it did, for a month and a third of a month in an uninhabited solitude, without the presence of friend or companion to comfort or to sympathize.

During this time we are told that he fasted. This was probably of set purpose, though some think it was due to his mental preoccupation and abstraction. According to Dr. Weiss, he fasted because of the necessity of the situation in which he was placed in the wilderness; and it does not mean, he thinks, that he abstained absolutely from the use of food, but availed himself of the scant supply which the desert

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<sup>1</sup>The present participle may mean either that he was under a prolonged and unceasing stress of temptation, or that he was during the forty days subjected to repeated temptations.

afforded.<sup>1</sup> This is hardly probable, however; for this would not really be fasting, which is voluntary abstinence from food from motives connected with religion.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Luke says, in so many words, "And he did eat nothing in those days."<sup>3</sup> When the evangelists tell us that at the end of the month and more, he hungered, it is not the record of an inference of theirs. It is their way to give a bare record of simple objective facts, not their own subjective reflections—a long noticed and a striking peculiarity of their wonderful histories. When they say "He hungered," they record, though in a single word, an objective fact of the experience of Jesus as, doubtless, he had related it himself, an experience which had been to him a most painful and never-to-be-forgotten reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Christ, I. 338.

<sup>2</sup> See *νηστεύω* in Thayer's Lexicon. In Acts xxvii. 33, where Paul tells the people on the ship they had "fasted" for fourteen days, the word *νηστεύω* is not used.

<sup>3</sup> Luke iv. 2, *Καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδέν.*

## THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

In this desperate extremity, suffering and faint with an intolerable gnawing hunger, it occurred to him that he might there alone in the desert provide for himself bread by willing to put forth the miraculous power which clearly he had the conviction of possessing. Doubtless the suggestion came to him with great force and startling plausibility. What harm or wrong could there be in doing it? And if he did not very soon get relief by this or by some means, would he not perish?

Whatever difficulty we may have in discovering why it would have been wrong, it is certainly not difficult to see that it was a very real and powerful temptation. If the reality of temptation consists in a real desire for that which is offered to us and placed within our reach, if the reality of temptation is measured by the strength of the inward craving which is appealed to, then there was reality in this temptation of Jesus. If the self-chosen

pain and the self-imposed conflict that are involved in refusing to yield, and in resisting to the bitter end—if these go to constitute the reality of temptation, then was Jesus as really tempted as we are. There is no want of human nature so desperate as extreme hunger. It is an admitted axiom among men that a man is excusable for theft or robbery, or almost any crime short of murder, when goaded by the pangs of a desperate hunger. Men make this allowance for no other want or craving or passion of human nature. Without having to suppose that there was any appetency in Jesus of a sinful nature to give rise to temptation or to respond to temptation, yet there was a craving which, *though innocent in itself*, was as real and as powerful and as intense as any sensuous or fleshly craving ever experienced by men; and the denial of its gratification, when gratification was at his command, involved suffering as real and pain as keen as any that we ever know in resisting temptation.

There are passages in the Gospels which imply that Jesus existed before he was born into this world; nevertheless we believe that he was as truly tempted as if he had no pre-existence. It is equally implied that he had a divine nature, yet he was as truly tempted as if he had not. He was tempted like as we are and yet without sin, for the temptation came from without and was addressed to an innocent though intense craving of the physical nature which he had in common with all men. ✓

But wherein would it have been wrong for him to relieve his hunger by a miracle? On this point we shall find it instructive to compare another experience of temptation which Jesus had toward the close of his life, a temptation involving the same principle. When he was seized by the mob at Jerusalem and some of his friends and followers would have resisted with arms and violence, he gently restrained them, adding that if he would pray for it his Father would instant-

ly (ἄρτι) furnish him a host of the heavenly powers for his defense and deliverance.<sup>1</sup> But he *would* not pray. He could have had it for the asking—he *would* not ask. Why would he not ask? To have availed himself of supernatural aid for deliverance, though it was clearly at his command, would have been to break down at the crucial point of his life-work. To have turned aside in that hour and power of darkness, to have stopped short of the cross, would have been to wreck the plan of his life, which, according to the interpretation of all the schools and all the ages, had its chiefest fact, its most potent factor, and its crowning glory in his gentle and unconstrained submission to the pain and shame of crucifixion. The bitter sneer of the bystanders at the cross was sublimely true, and, like Caiaphas, they spoke wiser than they knew when they said, “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” For in

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 53.



saving himself he could not have saved others.

The situation was similar at the time of the temptation in the wilderness. He was tempted, in an emergency of his human life, to make use of powers for his own personal relief which were put at his command,<sup>1</sup> not for this purpose, but for the accomplishment of his Father's will and his Father's plan for the enlightenment and recovery of men. To have used them for his personal benefit would have been to make a misuse of them, and this on general principles. Ministers of the gospel who are called to positions of prominence, popularity, and power are often tempted to use all this for their own personal advantage. And if they yield to this temptation, as alas! they too often do, they lose their power and become the objects of uni-

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<sup>1</sup> From what Jesus said as to his ability to secure supernatural aid against his murderers at Jerusalem, we infer that at any other emergency he could have had it for the asking.

versal disapprobation and condemnation. And if even in an *emergency* they or any other class of men make use for their own relief of what has been committed to them by others and for others as a trust, it is deemed immoral and wrong.

But there are yet other reasons why it would have been an error for Jesus to use for the relief of his own personal needs, however urgent, the supernatural power intrusted to him. He was among men the Son of man. He was subject to all the conditions, limitations, and disabilities of human nature. His mission was not only to teach the ultimate and absolute truth concerning God's relation to man and man's normal relation to God, but what is still more important and necessary, to realize it and to illustrate it in his own everyday life, and thus to show the possibility of it and to bring it home to men's bosoms. Whatever may be the meaning of his death, this was the meaning of his life. But to have availed

himself, in the emergencies of his life, of powers that are denied to men in general, would have defeated his mission. It would have removed him at once from the conditions of humanity and have made him other than a son of man.

And yet again, it would have rendered him incapable of truly sympathizing with men in their emergencies, their troubles, and their trials; and in turn this fact would have made his example powerless to beget confidence and to create hope in men. The alternative was to commit himself to his Father and trust in his care, while he suffered and waited. To have yielded to the suggestion made would have been a cowardly shrinking from what was involved in living his life and discharging his task in the world, among men; and this shrinking would have meant a distinct *distrust* in the providential fatherly care of God his Father, about which he had so many and such beautiful things to say to others in his after ministry.

But there were other elements in this first temptation. It was complicated with a subtle suggestion, introduced in a sort of incidental way, as it were, and intended either to awaken a desire or to appeal to an existing desire to *prove*, by an objective visible effect of his word, that he *was* the Son of God by testing his miracle-working power. For he had not yet put this to the test. The face meaning of the temptation was, under the agony and stress of an awful biting hunger in that remote and desolate solitude, to resort just for once to the use of supernatural power for much-needed relief. How entirely reasonable this! and, withal, how innocent! But then there was also that sidewise hint so delicately suggested, so faintly insinuated as hardly to be recognized, an undertone scarce audible, whispering: "Besides, you may, in doing this, put to the test that tantalizing consciousness of power to work wonders, and so in the same act *prove* that you *are*

the Son of God.” “Not to do this, when suggested, is to confess that you are not the Son of God.”

In trying to appreciate the force of this sidewise suggestion, we should bear in mind not only that Jesus had never yet wrought a miracle, but that no miracle had been wrought for hundreds of years.

To sum up: For Jesus to have yielded to his feelings, to have made the decision in his mind and spoken the word of command with his lips, would have been a cowardly and selfish abandoning of a painful post and taking refuge from a painful situation by falling back on his exceptional and *superhuman* powers; it would have been a distrust of his Father's faithfulness and care; it would have been a misuse of his Father's sacred trust; and lastly, to have consented to test his miraculous power as a proof and credential of his Sonship would have been to *doubt* his Father's word, “Thou art my beloved Son.”

And to have done any one of these things would have been to fall below the ideal personally, and in consequence to forfeit his fitness for the Messianic office and mission.

It is worthy of note that the three recorded temptations of Jesus are such as no man ever experienced before, and yet such as are exactly suited to Jesus in the unique situation in which he was placed at the opening of his career. "The story of Christ's temptation is as unique as his character. It is such a temptation as was never experienced by any one else, yet just such a temptation as Christ, and Christ in those peculiar circumstances, might be expected to experience."

In particular was the first temptation suited to such a person and character as Jesus is by his New Testament biographers represented to be. What inventor or stream of tendency could ever have conceived a temptation, apparently so simple and insignificant, in reality so appropriate, so subtle,

so vital, so complex, and so far-reaching as we have found this first temptation to be? And yet the statement of it is so brief, the account so meager, prosaic, and matter-of-fact, that one feels tempted to believe that the writers themselves did not perceive the meaning of it, but only put down the bare facts as they heard them. Or, if they did understand it, they restrained themselves from interpreting, amplifying, and commenting here as they did throughout these unique narratives which record the most startling events and the strangest career the world ever saw.

Moreover, it seems incredible if these narratives were invented, that the inventors of them should, with one accord and consistently, refrain from attributing any miracle to their hero until he was thirty years of age and more, and then have represented him as *refusing* to work a miracle when solicited to do so under circumstances that to men would seem to render it justifiable, and be-

sides, have represented that apparently innocent and reasonable suggestion as coming from the devil.

The view here taken of the first temptation is confirmed by the answer with which Jesus rejects it. He declined to use any means for his personal relief that were denied to men in general. He has no special supernatural knowledge or revelation with which to detect the design or to oppose the suggestion of the evil one. He relies only on such means for strengthening himself against the temptation as were in reach of any who would avail themselves of them—the preparation of prayer and the contents of the sacred Scriptures. And he uses a passage which refers to man in the most general sense, as man. It stands written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of God.” He used these words in their original historical sense, which answered exactly to his circumstances at this crisis of his life. The situation of Jesus in the wil-



derness was similar to that of the Israelites in the desert at the time to which the words quoted refer. As the Israelites at that time were cut off from ordinary supplies, and were to wait in trustful dependence on God's "*word*" implicitly pledging him to provide for them, though in his own time and way, so Jesus, though having power to provide means for his own immediate relief, was like other men to wait in trustful dependence for the relief that was pledged in his Father's word, and not to act in disregard and distrust of him.

#### THE SECOND TEMPTATION.

The appeal in the first temptation was to the deepest need of the physical nature; in the second, it was to a religious instinct and faculty. Under the trying stress of his circumstances and the satanic temptation, pressed upon him, Jesus had exhibited in an extraordinary degree a steadfast, unwavering trust in his Father. This was his refuge and strength; and this is now turned

into a snare, and made the basis of an appeal to go wrong in another direction.

The appeal is enforced by a specific assurance drawn from those very Scriptures which had furnished him in part the means of detecting the meaning of the former temptation and of resisting it. This temptation consisted in the suggestion of a trust in God which, though made to appear warranted by God's own word, was in fact unwarranted and presumptuous. It would be all the stronger because it coincided with the natural reaction produced in his mind by the consciousness of his victory over the temptation to distrust. To throw himself down from the dizzy height of the temple's topmost pinnacle would be an act of venturesome trust, of extravagant faith, such as might easily occur to one in Jesus' circumstances and in the mood of conscious victory. It was as if the tempter had said: "Thou hast achieved a great triumph over nature through thy trust in God. Trust him

thou canst, still further, and by a bold venture wherein he will uphold thee, thou canst yet put him to a decisive test whether thou art the Son of God. Thou canst securely venture on him to uphold thee and preserve thee, because in his word there is a specific assurance that he will give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up. Put him to the test, and see if he will not give this proof that thou art his Son, and this indubitable token of his accompanying presence and power for the lonely untrodden path and the awful untried task that are before thee."

The reply of Jesus shows that this was the meaning of the temptation: "It is written, Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to a test." To trust God in an existing and unavoidable emergency *is* warranted, is right, is one's prime duty. To *create* an emergency for the purpose of wantonly putting God to the test whether he will miraculously interpose to save him from a deadly

peril of *his own making*, that would not be trust. It would be a presumptuous sort of experimenting with God and with death. To have leaped from the top of the temple would have put God, if one may so speak, in this dilemma: If he did not interpose in a miraculous way for his preservation, inevitable and immediate death would be the result. If God did interpose, it would be for no worthy cause, but only to gratify a mere prurient desire for a "sign," which Jesus himself so often and so emphatically rebuked in others in his after ministry. It would be far less justifiable than to have relieved his hunger by a miracle, for that was an emergency that came up in the course of duty. It would therefore be to *force* upon God the alternative of *leaving* him to destroy his life or of working a stupendous and overwhelming miracle for a wrong end.<sup>1</sup> "While

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<sup>1</sup> "It would have been to force God to do what he himself in the first temptation had refused to do."—*Fairbairn*.

God's protection *is* promised to the man of piety when he is in the path of duty, it is not, when in a self-willed way he *chooses* dangerous paths only to put this to the proof." Jesus' detection of the meaning of this temptation and his prompt and positive refusal to yield to it are a striking example of his perfect poise and fine sanity. Here, also, it is not difficult to see that the temptation was real, while at the same time no sin was involved. The impulse to trust in God is not only innocent, it is a moral excellence, the root of all righteousness, the ground of all goodness.

### THE THIRD TEMPTATION.

The devil recognizes now, if he did not know before, and admits that this is an exceptional person, destined to introduce a new movement and a new order in this world. He therefore now shifts his point of attack and proposes a way by which this end may be secured and the new order in-

troduced without a long and sorrowful process of suffering, suspense, and struggle.

It is generally if not universally understood that this was a temptation to avail himself of the popular view of the Messianic kingdom on the part of the Jews of the time. They believed and expected that the Messiah would establish a temporal-political power and bring the nations of the world into subjection to it.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless such a Prince-Messiah would have been hailed with frantic joy by the millions of Jews who were scattered over the world, and at his call they would have attached themselves to his person with the wildest enthusiasm. On one occasion when certain of the Jews thought this Prince-Messiah had come to them, they attempted to take him in spite of his reluctance and make him king—king of the land of their fathers, king of the an-

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<sup>1</sup>This is more fully developed in the chapter on the Kingdom of God. See also Study I. on the Conditions and the Beginnings.

cient realm of David and Solomon, king of the innumerable Jews who were scattered throughout the world, from the Indus on the east to the Tiber on the west.<sup>1</sup> What visions of swift and easy conquest and of universal empire must have passed before the mind's eye of the royal Nazarene as the kingdoms of the world were made to pass before him! For there is no exaggeration in the record when it says that all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them appeared to his vision and came within his reach on condition of his adopting the worldly-political views of the contemporary Jews and the methods by which the crafty Herods in his native land and the mighty Cæsar on the Tiber secured and held their

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<sup>1</sup>The Jews in the provinces of the Roman empire "were numbered not by thousands, but by millions." Josephus, *Ant.* XI. v. 2, says that "beyond the Euphrates alone the Jews are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers": *μυριάδες ἄπειροι*. The Sibylline Oracles say: "Every land and every sea is filled with them." Cf. Schürer, II. ii. 220-226.

place and power. Such a temptation could assail only a man who had the consciousness of a royal dignity and the confidence of a royal destiny.

But what was the meaning of this temptation? Was it a temptation to the indulgence of ambition, that last infirmity of noble minds; an ambition like that which impelled the dreamer of Mecca to set about the establishment of a power whose subjects should bow to Allah and Mahomet; an ambition like that which moved the bishops of the Roman See to undertake the establishment of a hierarchy that should by the combination of spiritual and temporal power bring the world into subjection to God and to the pope? The reference to the "glory" of the kingdoms of this world seems to imply that there was an element of this sort in the temptation. But the strength of the temptation was not in this. The appeal was chiefly to that powerful impulse which human nature has to



shrink from pain and suffering. We have seen already how Jesus understood from the history of the servants of God in the Old Testament, that as their ministry had brought on them persecutions and afflictions, much more would the work of the Messiah involve persecution, loneliness, and sorrow. Again and again he refers to the persecutions which the righteous must endure, and particularly the followers of the Messiah. And we have hints dropped here and there that from the beginning he knew that the worst would befall him. In Mark ii. 20 he says, "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be *taken away from* them, and then will they fast in *that day*." This was said incidentally when he was speaking on the relation of fasting to the new kingdom. Passing over the enigmatical expression in John ii. 19-21, we find him saying again, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." This reference to his death is

also incidentally introduced in his exposition of the way of salvation to Nicodemus. The suffering that awaited him seems to have occupied a large place in his mind, and was continually present to his consciousness.

At any rate, it is certain that Jesus evinced this natural human disposition to shrink from suffering on other occasions in his life. It is vividly expressed in those words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"<sup>1</sup> He repelled with promptness and decision the effort of the people to take him by force and make him king, and immediately withdrew to a place of solitude for prayer.<sup>2</sup> When Peter, on the occasion of his confession, undertook to disabuse the mind of Jesus of the conviction that it was necessary

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xii. 50.

<sup>2</sup> "He withdrew into a mountain himself alone." John vi. 15. Comp. Mark vi. 46: "He departed into a mountain to pray."

for him to suffer humiliation and death, Jesus repelled the suggestion with a warmth and an energy which showed that it was all too welcome to his sensitive and shrinking human nature. On more occasions than one during his ministry he felt this shrinking to such an extent that it became each time a *temptation* to turn back or to turn aside; and he could only put the temptation away by reminding himself that *it was his Father's will* that he should endure. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."<sup>1</sup> On another occasion he said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"<sup>2</sup> And yet again near the close he makes a pathetic prayer to his Father with that childlike, affectionate appeal never elsewhere used by him: "*Abba*, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this

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<sup>1</sup> John xii. 27, 28.    <sup>2</sup> John xviii. 11.

cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.”<sup>1</sup>

These expressions help us, in some measure, to realize the force of the temptation which Jesus experienced in the wilderness to shrink from the suspense, the loneliness, and the agony which he knew were involved in the accomplishment of his mission through self-sacrifice and the slow process of moral and spiritual renovation and education. The temptation was as real for him as any temptation ever experienced by us to shrink from the pain involved in duty. It was, in kind, the same temptation that he experienced in the mysterious agony of Gethsemane. If there was reality in that sorrow of soul which was unto death, Jesus was as really tempted as we are. In so far as that agony exceeded any agony and bitterness of soul ever endured by man, just so far was Jesus even more bitterly tempted than men in general are.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark xiv. 36.

If these observations and those concerning the reality of the previous temptations are well founded, we have a hint of the solution of the difficulty mentioned in the chapter on the Supernatural Birth, namely, that the divine paternity of Jesus so differentiated him from men in general as to make it impossible for him to be as really tempted as men are.

We cannot say, we do not know, whether Jesus was ever tempted to a sinful impatience or anger, to retaliation, to hatred, to falsehood, to covetousness, to jealousy, to envy, to pride, or to any of the ordinary sins of humanity. And yet he was tempted to those things which would have been as wrong for him as the common sins of human nature are for us. He was tempted to those things the doing of which would have made him fall below the ideal, the absolute ideal; which would have unfitted him to be Messiah. He was tempted to leave undone or deviate from those

things without which he could *not* have fulfilled his Father's will. And he was tempted in such a way that it shook his whole being, tempted in such a way that resistance cost him greater struggles than we have ever known. The records give us the particulars of these sinless but terrible temptations. They were as unique and the records are as unique as the person and character they describe.

Jesus' reply to this last temptation is a declaration of his preference of the plan and will of his Father, whatever of sacrifice and self-renunciation that might involve, to any plan of a worldly sort, whatever of sacrifice that might enable him to escape. The establishment of a worldly sovereignty did not befit the nature of the Messianic kingdom, but would rather serve the purposes of sin and Satan in entire opposition to the will of God. What the will of God required was not to gain the rule over others by worldly means, but

to render loving service to others in the spirit of self-sacrifice; and this was eminently true of him who was to be Messiah, for he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for them.<sup>1</sup>

So Jesus put this temptation aside, though in doing so he acted in a way contrary to the views universally held by his Jewish fellow-countrymen and contemporaries, who believed that Messiah's kingdom was to be established by force of arms and to rule the world; and contrary, as well, to what the prophecies of the Old Testament seemed, on their face, to teach concerning the nature of this kingdom. For did they not say that Messiah was to rule the nations with a rod of iron and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel?<sup>2</sup> In the face of all this, and in spite of his personal shrinking, he stood fast, though he stood absolutely alone.

The fact that Jesus had such a temptation

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Wendt, I. 104.    <sup>2</sup> Psalm ii. 2.

at the beginning of his career and put it aside, means that the thought and plan of a worldly-political kingdom had been presented to his mind and *deliberately rejected*. It means that he did not have and try one plan to begin with, and failing in it, resort to another, as even Weiss contends. It means that he did not change his plan. The same plan which he had in the middle and in the end of his ministry he had at the beginning. This third temptation is a proof that he *rejected* any other.

“Here then is one who believes himself born for universal monarchy and capable by his rule of giving happiness to the world. He is intrusted with powers and can employ means that would make it possible for him to attain that supremacy with ease. By the use of these powers, unprecedented and miraculous, and these means, which are ready to his command, it is possible for him to establish a universal and absolute dominion, and so to give to the



race laws that may make it happy. But he deliberately determines to adopt *another* course, to found his reign upon the consent and not upon the fears of mankind, to trust himself with his royal claims and his terrible purity and superiority defenseless among men, and, however bitterly their envy may persecute him, to use his matchless powers only in doing them good.

“This he actually did, and that evidently *in pursuance of a fixed plan*. In this course he *persevered*, although politically, so to speak, it was fatal to his position, and though it bewildered his most devoted followers. And yet, by so doing, he raised himself to a throne which he has occupied for nigh two thousand years, and gained an influence and authority over men greater far than they have ever allowed to any ruler or legislator, greater than the most extravagant dream of prophet ever attributed to Messiah himself.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ecce Homo, 22, 23.

But Jesus' temptations did not end with his experience in the wilderness. They were renewed from time to time during his life, and that too not only, as Weiss has observed, when altogether new tasks were laid upon him as his destined passion drew near, but also as often as it was necessary to carry out in detail the fundamental resolutions which were formed on the occasion of this temptation in the wilderness. Not only does the declaration of the apostles assert that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15), but Jesus himself also speaks of his temptations which his disciples shared with him (Luke xxii. 28), and he speaks of Peter as his tempter (Mark viii. 33). The manner in which he sets himself forth as an example (Matt. xi. 29; John xiii. 15), or in which he makes the divine favor, which he enjoys, dependent on his fulfillment of the divine will (John viii. 29), is not compatible with a holiness belonging to him by nature, the at-

tainment of which cost him no moral labor and no conflict. For him, too, it was necessary by constant self-denial to refuse to follow the paths that promised him a satisfaction of his natural human wishes, and, by an obedient acquiescence in the divine will, to resolve on those ways that were right. As in the case of all men, this was and remained the moral task of his life.

Hence the need of prayer (Mark i. 35; vi. 46; xiv. 35), a need which Luke especially delights in setting forth (Luke iii. 21; vi. 12; ix. 18, 28; xi. 1), and which only he can feel who has still to strengthen himself for the fulfillment of the moral task assigned him. For this moral labor, however, every situation which furnishes occasion to choose one's own ways, and promises, in consequence, the gratification of his own desires, becomes a source of temptation. And this temptation cannot be overcome without a conflict with natural impulse, which, though sinless in itself, becomes sinful, if when

the higher divine will demands its suppression, the human will yields to it and carries it out, in opposition to the will of God. This conflict is renewed again and again as often as life brings new tasks. Accordingly, Jesus refused to be called good (Mark x. 18). "There is none good but one, that is God." Man can only become good, because even after the most perfect solution of any given moral problem, new problems are being continually presented to him, until, having reached the end and goal, he is approved as perfect.

Jesus approved himself in every temptation and gained the victory in every conflict. Thus he *became* that which he would not be called until the trial of his whole life was accomplished—he *became* the absolutely Good, the counterpart of his Father in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Weiss, *Life of Christ*, I. 351.

## VI.

### The Kingdom of God.

IMMEDIATELY after his baptism and trial in the wilderness, Jesus entered upon his public ministry. His proclamation, according to Mark, the oldest Gospel, was that the kingdom of God was now come. Himself the solitary fact and token of its advent, he betrays not the slightest indication of uncertainty or hesitancy, as if his proclamation were tentative or his plan an experiment. Never at any point of his after life, or in any discourse subsequently delivered, does he announce more clearly or declare more firmly that the kingdom of God had appeared among men. His proclamation is buoyant in spirit, jubilant in tone. And if his first announcement of the kingdom indicates his certainty of its advent, the frequency with which he used the expression during his whole ministry shows how it determined his modes of thought; and the un-

varying consistency with which he adhered to the conception, in his discourses, parables, instructions, and actions, shows that from the beginning to the end of his ministry he had a fixed plan, which he did not in any way modify. Nor did he in any instance, either in his teachings or his actions, diverge from it.

This plan was the establishment among men of the kingdom whose advent he proclaimed. If we read through the Gospels, particularly the synoptic Gospels, with this in view, we shall be no less impressed than surprised at the frequent recurrence of this conception and its cognates.

But what does Jesus mean by this kingdom of God? In order to understand, it will be necessary to make a brief study of the situation and attitude of the Jewish people at the time of Jesus in connection with their antecedent history, and with the contents of their Scriptures.

The thought of a kingdom of God was

current in the time of Jesus, and was accompanied by a general expectation of its coming. This expectation was based upon the history and the prophecies contained in the Old Testament. That history related how Israel came to be and had been the theocratic people, the people whose ruler and king was Jehovah himself. And though after the time of Samuel, the people had human kings, these were the representatives of Jehovah who still governed and directed the nation through them—the government was still a theocracy, a kingdom of God. This kingdom was overthrown at the time of the capture and destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the king, princes, and people to Babylon, 599–587 B.C.

And even when the exile ended, and by the decree of Cyrus the people were restored to their land, the kingdom was not reëstablished. The house of David had fallen into obscurity and decay, and the people were under the dominion and at the mercy of foreign

heathen powers. Things had gone on in this way for hundreds of years, sometimes better, generally worse, till at last after many vicissitudes the chosen people of Jehovah found themselves ruled over and oppressed by a usurping despot whose name has become one of the world's synonyms for tyranny and cruelty.

And yet during all those long and dismal centuries the people had cherished in greater or less degree the theocratic hope, a hope based upon the prophecies contained in their sacred and divinely inspired Scriptures. Believing these Scriptures, as they did, it is not wonderful that they still clung to the conviction that God had not forsaken them. They believed that their misfortunes were the result of their disobedience, and that Jehovah, who had allowed their calamities to come upon them for punishment and discipline, would some time, somehow, again "visit" his ancient people and fulfill to them his ancient pledges.



If we can put ourselves in the place of the Jews of that day, and with their feelings and from their standpoint read the promises and pledges made to them by God through his prophets, we shall be better able to understand how it was they still entertained the theocratic hope, and what it was they hoped for. Let us make an actual examination of some of these Scriptures.

To go no further back than the time of David, we read in 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16, that it was said to him by one of the prophets: "Thy seed shall build a house for me, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom *forever*. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure *forever* before thee; thy throne shall be established *forever*."

We read in Hosea, who was prophet under Uzziah and Hezekiah (746-735 B.C.): "Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David the king, and shall come with fear unto the Lord in the latter days." Hos. iii. 5.

Amos, who prophesied in the days of Uzziah (760-746 B.C.), says with wonderful distinctness and vividness: "They shall go into captivity before their enemies, for lo, I will sift the house of Israel among the nations." Amos ix. 4, 9. "In that day [the day of return] I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations which are called by my name, saith the Lord." Amos ix. 9-11.

Now take some of the Psalms. In Psalm ii. 6-9, speaking of the theocratic king, Jehovah is represented as saying: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me and I will give thee the *nations* for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Psalm lxxii.: "Give the king thy judgments, O God." (ver. 1.) "He shall judge thy people with righteousness." (ver. 2.) "In his days shall the righteous flourish." (ver. 7.) "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (ver. 8.) "*All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.*" (ver. 11.) "His enemies shall lick the dust." (ver. 9.) "His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him." (ver. 17.)

Psalm lxxxix.: "I have *sworn* unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." (verses 3, 4.) "Once have I *sworn* by my holiness. *I will not lie* unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon." (verses 35-37.)

Jeremiah xxx. 8, 9 (626-561 B.C.): "In that day they shall no more serve strangers,

but they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." Jeremiah xxxiii. 17: "Thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."

Ezekiel xxxiv. 23, 24 (592-574 B.C.): "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David (shall be) prince among them." Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, 25: "And my servant David shall be king over them. They shall also walk in my statutes and do them. And David my servant shall be their prince forever."

Daniel ii. 44: "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people. But it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand *forever*." Daniel vii. 13, 14, 27: "I saw and, behold, there came with the

clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man. . . . And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an *everlasting* dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an *everlasting* kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Zechariah ix. 9 (520-518 B.C.): "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh to thee."

1 Mac. ii. 57: "David for being merciful possessed the throne of an *everlasting* kingdom."

The question is not, here, What is the exact, historical meaning of these prophecies? What is here pointed out is that they

stood in the Scriptures of the Jewish people, and they stood there as the utterances of holy men who had been canonized as prophets of God, whose word, therefore, could not fall or fail. These Scriptures did foretell a kingdom, of extraordinary character, which should be the continuation or the successor of the kingdom of David. The passages already quoted, if taken to mean what they say, abundantly witness this.

The kingdom founded by David and continued for some centuries by his descendants and successors, had, as a matter of fact, lapsed. And yet there stood the prophecies, uttered, not by one prophet, nor by the prophets of one period or age, but by prophets who were contemporary with David, by prophets between David and the exile, by prophets who lived during the exile, and by prophets who lived after the exile, and so on down to the very close of the prophetic period. Note the language of Zacharias in Luke ii. 69, 70: "God

hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been *since the world began.*”

In these prophecies the universal extension and the everlasting duration of the promised kingdom were plainly set forth. The fact that the Jews had once had a kingdom, a kingdom whose head was the appointee and representative of God, a kingdom which was manifestly the peculiar care of God, and the fact that, though this kingdom had lapsed, nevertheless, the most marvelous things were predicted by the prophets of all periods concerning its duration and extent, both during its actual existence and still more after its fall—these facts gave birth to a general expectation that that kingdom would be restored by the power of God, and that a prince of the Jewish people and the house of David, as the representative of God, would lead its victorious armies to the conquest of the na

tions of the world. Believing themselves to be a peculiar people, the elect people of God, wedded with intense and tenacious devotion to the conviction that they were superior to all other peoples, taught and encouraged by their sacred Scriptures to believe that their kingdom would be restored, nursing the ever-living tradition that this would sooner or later be actually accomplished, it was natural, it was inevitable that they should be holding themselves in an attitude of expectancy.

As a matter of history, we find that they did cherish all through the centuries the theocratic hope begotten by the events of the past and the prophecies of the future.

There is the most ample testimony in contemporaneous Jewish literature<sup>1</sup> that this ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Josephus, the Sibylline Oracles, the Assumption of Moses, the Psalms of Solomon, the Book of Enoch, the Fourth Book of Ezra, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the Book of Jubilees, the Targums. Cf. Schürer, II. ii. 137-154.



pectation was widely and eagerly cherished at the time of the appearing of Jesus, and doubtless the stirring events closely connected with his appearance, such as the preaching of John the Baptist, etc., intensified this feeling among the Jews. Some examples:

Josephus, Wars of the Jews, VI. v. 4: "But now what did most elevate them [the Jews] in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how about that time one from their country should become ruler of the habitable earth. The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular," etc.

Take some extracts from one of the so-called Psalms of Solomon, written by devout Jews about 63-48 B.C. These will at the same time show how the Scripture prophecies were interpreted at this period.

Psalm xvii.: "Thou, O Lord, didst choose David to be king over Israel, and

didst swear unto him touching his seed forever that his kingdom should not fail before thee." (ver. 5.) "Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them [the Jews] their king, the son of David, in the time which thou, O God, knowest, that he may reign over Israel thy servant." (ver. 23.) "And gird him with strength that he may *break in pieces* them that rule unjustly." (ver. 24.) "Purge Jerusalem from the heathen that trample her down to destroy her." (ver. 25.) "He shall thrust out sinners from the inheritance, and as *potter's vessels with a rod of iron shall he break in pieces* all their substance." (ver. 26.) "He shall destroy ungodly nations with the word of his mouth." (ver. 27.) "He shall gather together a holy people whom he shall lead in righteousness." (ver. 28.) "He shall judge the nations and peoples with the wisdom of his righteousness." (ver. 31.) "He shall possess the nations of the heathen to serve him beneath his yoke. He shall glo-

rify the Lord in a place to be seen of the whole earth.” (ver. 32.) “And there shall be no iniquity in his days in their [the Jews’] midst, for all shall be holy, and their king is the Lord *Messiah!*” (ver. 35.) “He himself also is pure from sin, so that he may rule a mighty people and rebuke princes by the word of his mouth.” (ver. 41.) “He shall not faint all his days.” (ver. 42.) “And who can stand against him?” (ver. 44.) “This is the majesty of the king of Israel which God hath appointed, to raise him up over the house of Israel.” (ver. 47.) “Blessed are they that shall be born in those days, to behold the blessing of Israel which God shall bring to pass in the gathering together of the tribes.” (ver. 50.) “May God hasten his mercy toward Israel. May he deliver us from the abomination of unhallowed adversaries. The Lord, he is our King from henceforth and even for evermore.” (ver. 51.)

This prevailing expectancy is echoed in

our Gospels, and it is shared by all classes. The interest which the Pharisees and leaders of the people at Jerusalem felt is shown by the embassy they sent to John the Baptist to know if *he* was the Messiah, and if not, what relation he bore to the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. (John i. 19-24.) But the common people as well shared in the expectation, as is illustrated in the language of the peasant disciples of John the Baptist, one of whom, Andrew, said to Peter, "We have found Messiah," and another one, Philip, said to Nathanael, "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write we have found." The same thing is expressed in the language of Zacharias: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel. For he hath visited his people." (Luke i. 68.) And of Simeon: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles; and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke ii. 30-32.)

Now there were many differences of view among the Jews of the time of Jesus as to the character and characteristics of the looked-for kingdom. Of these there is not room to speak. In one leading feature, however, there seems to have been pretty general agreement, and that was that, whatever else it might be, it would be also an external, national-political kingdom, which, with Messiah as Cæsar, would speedily subdue all the kingdoms of the world in fulfillment of the splendid programme outlined by the prophets of old. This could be amply confirmed from the Jewish literature of the time, already referred to, but we do not need to go outside our own Gospels to find illustrations of it.

That the Pharisees held this view, is shown by the question which they asked of Jesus, "When is the kingdom of God coming?" He answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," as their question implied, "but is within you."

(Luke xvii. 20.) That the people in general held it, is shown by their effort to take Jesus by force and make him a king, as well as by the language of their hosannas at the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

His own disciples held this view long and late. James and John sought chief places in the kingdom which they supposed was soon to be set up at Jerusalem. (Matt. xx. 21.) He delivered the impressive and solemn parable of the pounds to correct the impression that because he was near to Jerusalem the kingdom of God would immediately appear. (Luke xix. 11.) After the resurrection they held to this view. They asked Jesus, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.)

Even the more devout among the people, those who believed that it would be preëminently a kingdom of righteousness, believed, at the same time, that it would be also a na-

tional-political kingdom. Note the following language in the *benedictus* of Zacharias: "God has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, salvation *from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us*; to grant unto us that we *being delivered out of the hand of our enemies*, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days." (Luke i. 69, 71, 74.)

From these data it appears that in whatever the views of Jesus' contemporaries differed, they all agreed at least in this, that the kingdom would be a national-political power that would deliver the Jews from the dominion of heathen governments and give them independence.

But Jesus did not adopt the current view, nor did he accommodate himself to it or endeavor in any way to meet it. In nothing does he show that he shared it in any degree. Nor does he ever betray any disposition to yield to it or to tone down his own

view by way of compromising with it. If so, where is the proof of it?

On the contrary, he everywhere and always resists and opposes this view, whether urged by the impulsive multitude or pressed upon him by his friends and followers. With the whole world against him, he stood firm, though he stood solitary and alone.

Not only did he repudiate the current worldly view, and consistently refuse to incorporate any element of it into his own, he showed himself independent of and superior to the Old Testament Scriptures themselves in refusing to adopt or to accommodate himself to the mixed view which is presented in almost all, if not all, the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom of God. For while these declare that it was to be a kingdom of righteousness, or imply it, as being the kingdom of God, they almost invariably include worldly elements, such as the employment of physical force in the establish-



ment of it or the exercise of temporal power over other nations. We can easily correct these views by reading into them the spiritual ideas which we have gotten from Jesus, but without these, we should probably interpret them as the Jews of the time of Christ did. It is the more surprising that in view of this feature of the prophetic and scriptural representations of the kingdom, Jesus kept so consistently and so rigidly aloof from *every* element of a temporal-national kind. In Jesus' conception and presentation, the kingdom of God was purely spiritual and ethical, without the least admixture of heterogeneous elements.

1. In his initial announcement of the kingdom, he states the conditions of entrance, and these are purely spiritual and ethical: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

2. In his great discourse on the characteristics of members of the kingdom, not one is laid down that is anything but spiritual and ethical. Blessed are the poor in spirit,

for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and they who have a passion for righteousness. Blessed are they who are *persecuted because of righteousness*, for *theirs* is the kingdom. Worldly prosperity, position, power are not included. Even the common necessities of life are *excluded*, if a distracting anxiety for them causes one to make the kingdom of God and his righteousness secondary and subordinate. Seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, the secondary thing, according to the context, being food and raiment. When we pray, we are to pray *first* for the coming of the kingdom of God, and then for our daily bread.

3. He declared distinctly the kingdom of God cometh not with observation; it is not an external phenomenon that men can observe. It is within you.

4. In general, the divine blessings which he promised his disciples comprised no kind

of external earthly prosperity, and no national supremacy, power, or glory; nor did he reckon among works of righteousness any kind of acts directed to mere political-national ends, but, on the contrary, declared that to pay tribute to the Roman emperor was a duty to be discharged along with duties to God.<sup>1</sup>

5. And in matters of an apparently unimportant and trivial character, he adhered consistently to this purely unworldly view. He promptly and positively refused to assume the function of a judge or arbiter in temporal matters, as when he was requested to interfere in the division of an estate between two brothers.

Jesus did not get his ideas, then, concerning the kingdom of God from current opinions and teachings, nor indeed does he follow the Old Testament itself. He repudiated one and transcended the other. For while

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Wendt.

he does not repudiate the Old Testament Scriptures, but repeatedly declares his acceptance of them and reverence for them, he evermore goes deeper than they. If the Old Testament writers mean what they seem to mean, then he had a knowledge of the nature of the kingdom of God to which they were, in comparison, strangers.

These facts set in bold relief the profound originality, the unique originality of the Man of Galilee. In his apprehension and comprehension of the kingdom of God, its character and meaning, he was solitary. Instead of being *helps* to the understanding of it, the opinions of his contemporaries and the outlines given in the Old Testament would have been *hindrances* to any other man. To him they were not. But his originality seems all the greater in that he rose above them.

In what is here said, it is not meant that the Old Testament writers did not hold spiritual and ethical views of truth and

character. In their descriptions of the righteousness of *individual* character and conduct, and in the expressions of their aspirations after God and holiness, they, in many instances, do not fall far short of the apostles themselves. But, as a rule, when they speak of the theocratic kingdom, their conceptions are more or less mixed with elements of a worldly temporal character.

## VII.

### Conditions of Entering the Kingdom.

THE form of Jesus' opening announcement of the kingdom is at once striking and significant. As a herald he lifts up his voice and proclaims, **THE TIME HAS BEEN FULFILLED!**<sup>1</sup> The meaning is that the time of waiting is ended. This reference was a backward glance at the history of the people of Israel with its significant events, its manifold prophecies, its long season of deepening suspense with alternations of expectation and disappointment. The proclamation was exactly adapted to meet the attitude and mood of an actual and current expectancy. It sounded in the ears of the Jews of the period as the proclamation of the fulfillment of the time of the captivity sounded in the ears of the homesick exiles by the rivers of Babylon.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 15.

It thus involves the continuity of the old and the new. The second part of the announcement contained the stirring news that at last, after so long a time of waiting, of hoping, of fearing, of despairing, the suspense was at an end, the long-expected kingdom was at hand!

How did Jesus know that the kingdom was at hand—the kingdom for which prophets and priests and kings and saints and seers had waited for weary centuries? It had not been set up. It had not appeared. There was nothing outward to be “observed.” And yet he knew it, and he declares it with tremorless assurance; and that before any obtrusive sign had appeared or any outward demonstration had been given. He knew it because he knew that he was the King, and that he should not fail nor be discouraged till he had set judgment in the earth.

He had the confidence, the consciousness that he was the one anointed for the king-

dom before any outward experiment or success had given him ground for the conviction or proof of the fact. And we may pause long enough to say that the character which he exhibited, the transcendent truth which he afterwards delivered, and the moral renovation of the world which he afterwards accomplished, combine to furnish to us conclusive evidence of the correctness of his convictions.

In one breath he announces the kingdom at hand and opens the way for entrance into it. The conditions of entrance make it clear that he did not derive his view of the kingdom of God from current traditions and teachings, and equally clear that he did not meet the popular view. In the opening of his public ministry, and in the opening sentence of his public teaching, according to Mark, he lays down conditions of entrance that are spiritual-ethical, pure and simple. "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel."



# Repentance .

*Entering the Kingdom.*

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This does not mean that men were to believe the proclamation of the advent of the kingdom to be true. If that were the meaning, the exhortation to believe would come before the exhortation to repent. Or at least the exhortation to repent would not come before the exhortation to believe. Moreover, the sense of the Greek is not believe the good tidings (to be true), but believe *in* the good tidings. The conditions of entrance, then, into the kingdom which he heralds are repentance and faith.

What is repentance? Taking the etymological significance of the word and interpreting this in view of what Jesus said and taught concerning repentance, it is a change of mind which turns away from ordinary worldly and selfish ways of viewing and estimating things, and adopts the views and standards given by Jesus himself in his revelation of truth concerning the spiritual nature and relation of man, the highest duty of man and the highest good of man.

“If God be a Father, repentance will be a change of mind ceasing to regard him in any lower sense. If man be a being of infinite importance and value, as a moral subject and son of God, then repentance will mean realizing human dignity and responsibility.” If it be possible for men to become like God, and if it be his will that men as his children should be like him, their Father, then repentance will be a change of mind forsaking all that is contrary to his will and striving to realize a likeness to his character. “If the kingdom of God be the highest conceivable object of human hopes and aims, it ought to be regarded and treated as such; and if men have not hitherto been doing that, to ask them to do so is to call them to repentance.” If men are putting riches, or position, or power, or pleasure, or glory before the kingdom of God, they need to renounce riches, pleasure, power, glory for the sake of the kingdom of God; and this is repentance. “For

the many, for the million, food and raiment are the first and chief objects of desire and pursuit. How great the need of repentance, if man's chief end is to seek the righteousness and the kingdom which Christ preached—a righteousness of the heart and a kingdom of filial relations with God.” Repentance consists in the recognition of the kingdom of God as the highest good, the inward spiritual righteousness of that kingdom as the highest law, and the endeavor to conform our whole life and conduct to these standards as the chief end of man.

But repentance is not all and is not sufficient, nor is it the only condition of entrance to the kingdom. It is coupled by Jesus with faith, and must always be taken in its vital connection with faith. Thus viewed, “repentance is not legal, but evangelical; not a habit of sadness, as if doing eternal penance for the past, but a turning of the moral energies in a new direction with cheerfulness and hope.”

If the kingdom of God is a free and gracious gift to be bestowed on those who will receive it, then what is demanded of men is that they receive it as a free gift; and this is faith. "To receive the kingdom as offered, is to believe. Faith is spiritual receptivity. Repentance means a change of mind consisting in *recognition* of the kingdom as the chief end of man. Faith means the *reception* of that kingdom as the highest good, the sum of all blessedness, bestowed on man as a free gift from God. The reception of the boon by faith is the most direct way to the goal aimed at in repentance, namely, the exaltation of the kingdom and its interests to a place of supremacy in men's inward affections and outward actions.'" <sup>1</sup>

But does not Jesus lay down other conditions of entrance? Does he not say "Except your righteousness exceed the

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<sup>1</sup>The foregoing quotations are from Bruce's Kingdom of God.

righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. v. 20.) Does not this presuppose and require a certain kind and degree of righteousness as a condition of entrance? It is merely the form of expression that seems to imply this. Jesus does not speak with the technical precision of theologians and theological schools, and though the language here used may seem to imply that he is speaking of a condition of entrance, in reality he is not. Having the righteousness which he had in mind, and which he describes at length in the great discourse that follows these words, already constitutes one a member of the kingdom; and one who has such righteousness is *ipso facto* a member of the kingdom. It is this character of righteousness that is identical with membership in the kingdom. Hence on the supposition that he is here laying down a condition of entrance this absurd consequence would follow: Except a man

have that righteousness which constitutes membership in the kingdom and marks him as a member of the kingdom, he can by no means enter the kingdom; *i. e.*, except a man be in the kingdom, he can by no means enter the kingdom. If Jesus, then, did not here refer to admission into the kingdom in its heavenly state at the last day, he uses the words as here equivalent to having no part in the kingdom. Having a righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees is an indispensable characteristic of members of the kingdom; those not having this higher righteousness are outside the kingdom, have no part in it. The same reasoning is applicable to what he says in Matt. vii. 21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall *enter into* the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father." Doing the will of his Father is what constitutes membership, is the very essence of membership, so that the man who does not do his will, whatever

he may say or claim, or profess or do, is not in the kingdom, and has no part or lot in it.

Again, the declaration that it is impossible for a rich man to *enter* the kingdom (Mark x. 24, 25) seems to be equivalent to saying that renunciation of riches is a condition of entrance. This is undoubtedly true. It is so frequent a subject of the teaching of Jesus, and is so strongly insisted on by him, that one of the greatest and most recent of the interpreters of Jesus' teaching devotes a separate section to the subject, as if it were a condition in itself, coördinate with repentance and faith.<sup>1</sup> But in reality this is included in, and is a part of, what Jesus means by repentance. If repentance is a necessary condition of entering the kingdom of God, any and every essential element of repentance is a necessary condition of entrance. A supposed repentance that leaves out any essential

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, vol. ii. 58-74.

element is vitiated, is no longer repentance. And a repentance that does not include the renunciation of riches is not repentance. This is in effect the view of the author just referred to. He says: "The complete application of the mind to the righteousness of the kingdom of God, and the withdrawal from all that conflicts with that righteousness, is impossible without a renunciation in principle of the eager pursuit and retention of earthly goods for their own sake. Because this renunciation is painful and difficult and costs an inner conflict, *on this very account* Jesus has laid the most decided and clearest stress upon the necessity of this renunciation for all those who belong to the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup> This is strong language, but it is no whit stronger than the teaching of Jesus warrants. Jesus has said both figuratively and without figure that it is impossible for a rich man to enter into the

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, vol. ii. 58, 59.



kingdom of God. This means that renunciation of his riches by a rich man is *for him* an impossible task. And the extreme rarity of this renunciation, as tested and evidenced by acts and facts, is a proof that Jesus did not speak rhetorically, and that he did not overstate the difficulty. For the bestowment of a small and comparatively insignificant proportion of a man's property, and that often in a way that purchases for him more than an equivalent in name and fame, is no proof of his renunciation of riches in the sense of Jesus.

The Church has not yet accepted the teaching of Jesus on the subject of money. There are multitudes of rich men in the Church to-day who, like Dives, live as princes, while Lazaruses are perishing not far from their gates by the slow processes of crumb-starvation. And there are yet others who, like the rich young ruler, are keeping the commandments and holding on to their riches with a passion that is stronger than

their love for suffering men or their regard for the words of Christ. But when the teachings of Jesus become more thoroughly understood and more widely expounded, and his spirit more deeply permeates the Church, we may hope for better things. A great metropolitan preacher of England thinks that even now there are tokens of improvement. I quote his earnest words: "To-day a millionaire is respected; there are signs that in future years a man leaving a huge fortune will be thought a semi-criminal. So does the spirit of Jesus spread and ferment."<sup>1</sup>

But again Jesus says, "Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall by no means enter therein." Here childlike receptivity seems to be made a condition of entrance. And so it is, but this is not adding a third condition to repentance and faith. The meaning of this

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<sup>1</sup>John Watson (Ian Maclaren), *The Mind of the Master*, p. 331.

striking logion of Jesus is so clearly and beautifully stated by an author already quoted that we venture to make use of his words:

“ The disciples forbade children to come to Jesus as being too insignificant to have any claim to be regarded by him. But in this very respect of having no claim, so that they could offer nothing, but only wish to have something, Jesus finds the ground for the children being permitted to come to him. For in this unpretentious receptivity he recognizes the necessary condition which must exist in all who would enter the kingdom of God. Under this childlike character he does not mean the virtue of childlike innocence or blamelessness, but only the receptivity itself on the part of those who do not regard themselves as too good or too bad for the offered gift, but receive it with hearty desire. And not only does he mean to bring the receptivity of children as to earthly goods into comparison with the receptiv-

ity which adults must manifest with reference to the kingdom of God—he means that the children have the same unpretentious receptivity in reference to the kingdom of God which is characteristic of them generally, since they have not any other possessions on which their hearts are set or any other qualities in which they at all pride themselves. Only one who does not think that he can and must first earn it by his own doings, only one who receives it as a little child receives it, can participate in its blessings.”<sup>1</sup>

No more beautiful or instructive illustration than this could be given of that faith which we have already found to be one of the conditions of entrance as laid down by Jesus in his opening announcement of the kingdom of God.

There is a saying of Jesus in the fourth Gospel which lays down a condition of entrance that cannot be identified with either

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt, ii. 49, 50.

repentance or faith. It is in his interview with Nicodemus: "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see [have experience of] the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." By these expressions he means the renewal of a man's nature by the Spirit of God, so that he becomes himself spiritual rather than carnal, and a partaker of the divine life, the *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, of which so much is said in the discourses of John's Gospel. This renewal, however, is not to be accomplished by man himself. It is the act of God. In being born or begotten of God the man is passive, the active agency is God's. Consistently with this he speaks of being born from above (*ἄνωθεν*), born of the Spirit (*ἐκ πνεύματος*). The same conception occurs three or four times in John's first Epistle, where the same verb (*γεννάω*) is used in the passive voice with the phrase (*ἐκ θεοῦ*) of God. Hence if this be viewed as a condition of

entrance into the kingdom, it is one to be fulfilled by God. But it is far from being an arbitrary or unconditional act on his part, relieving man of all coöperation or responsibility. On the contrary, the exercise of this regenerative, creative energy on the part of God is dependent on a condition to be fulfilled by man; and this condition is not overlooked, but is clearly indicated in this very interview. And it is identical with a condition laid down by Jesus in his teaching according to the synoptics: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also must the Son of man be lifted up, in order that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have eternal life." The same thing is brought out again in verses 16 and 17. This discourse from the fourth Gospel does not introduce another and a different condition, but the same condition, though in a different way and with a different view of its contents. For though repentance is not here mentioned, it is included

in the notion of faith. Faith is the trustful commitment of oneself to God, but it is psychologically impossible to commit oneself to God without turning away from and forsaking all that is contrary to God. Indeed, the discourses of Jesus in the fourth Gospel not only lay down faith as the condition of salvation, they as clearly set forth also the moral conditionality of faith itself. It is one of the commonplaces of these discourses that a man *cannot* have faith whose heart is not right, whose moral condition and whose attitude of will are opposed to the right. What is this moral conditionality of faith but repentance? Faith is the condition of entrance into the kingdom of God, into the experience of salvation; but repentance is the condition of faith. As salvation is impossible without faith, faith is impossible without repentance. No man will or can exercise faith in the sense which it has in the discourses of John's Gospel who does not will and desire and determine to be right-

eous, who does not will and desire and determine to abandon all that is unrighteous, who does not realize the evil, the misery, and the helplessness of sin, and who is not therefore lowly-minded and receptive and teachable. And what is this but the spirit of repentance?



## VIII.

### The King, the Law, and the Kingdom.

It may not be amiss to inquire why it was that Jesus adopted the conception of a kingdom as the determining idea in his thought and plan, especially in view of the fact that he repudiated the current popular view of his time, and did not altogether agree with that presented in the Old Testament prophets. Why did he not create or adopt some other conception than that of a kingdom, some conception which by reason of its originality and novelty would not be liable to be mixed up with wrong or perverted views and to consequent *misconception*? Was it because he wished to put himself, as far as possible, on common ground with his contemporaries in order the more readily to reach them? Or did he mean, by adopting the conception and phrase in which they

embodied their wrong view, to show more strikingly, by the contrast of his interpretation of it, the right view? Or, yet again, was it that, out of reverence for the older revelation and loyalty to the older dispensation, he wished to connect his teaching with these, and by so doing to bring into clear light the unity and continuity of the two? This was not in itself an unworthy motive; and as a matter of fact he does more than once, both explicitly and implicitly, teach that his own revelation was a continuation and completion of the revelation made to the Fathers and contained in the Old Testament Scriptures. But even this would hardly explain the way in which he holds to the conception and employs the expression, "kingdom of God." An occasional use of it would have identified his plan with the theocratic ideal of the prophets. But with him the conception of a kingdom is constant, organic, essential, determinative. For him that, and nothing

else, represents the reality which it is his mission to establish among men. Nay, it is that reality. If he adopts the conception from the Old Testament, it is because it fits the reality he is on earth to embody. In any case he does not use it in their narrow, national-political sense. We should rather say that the Old Testament writers used it because, under divine guidance and instruction, they caught some faint, distorted glimpses of that divine Utopian vision, which it has been God's gracious purpose to bring to realization among men. Jesus saw this divine Utopia without admixture of elements not belonging to it, saw it in its simplicity and ideal completeness, saw it clearly, saw that it was the

One far-off divine event,

Toward which the whole creation moved.

He saw that it had come, that he had come as King to bring in the kingdom, to teach men what the kingdom is and what its members must be, to draw men into it,

and to inspire them with an all-controlling, all-absorbing desire that God's kingdom, though it had come, might yet *so* come that God's will should be done on earth as it is done in heaven. And Jesus *called* it a kingdom because it *is* a kingdom. It *is* a kingdom because in a kingdom the will of the king is the law of the subject, and the law of the subject is absolute submission to the will and absolute devotion to the person of the king.

This idea of absolute sovereign and of absolute sovereignty does not commend itself as the highest ideal to minds that have been trained and formed under republican institutions and modes of life, minds accustomed to the liberty and equality of a democracy. To us the idea of human kingship, at any rate, is repugnant. This is because our impressions have been drawn from what we know of the abuses of kingship and the possibilities of abuse that inhere in the system, and from those in-

stances of it which have illustrated the weakness, the selfishness, the despotism, and the meanness of human nature when invested with power more or less irresponsible. But if the king were ideal in person, in endowments, and in character, if he were immeasurably superior to us in all respects, if he were infallible in wisdom while equally good in heart and noble in character, and if with all these qualities he were attached with single-hearted devotion to the highest well-being of his subjects, so that he would give up his life to their happiness and when necessary lay down his life for their good—these conditions would make absolute submission and perfect obedience the freest choice and the highest pleasure.

Such a king *is* the King of the kingdom of God. And this King is none other than Jesus, called the Christ, who is absolutely at one with God the Father, who is the image of his person, the transcript of his character, the visible representative of his maj-

esty and authority. The will of the King is expressed in words that sum up at once the whole law of the kingdom: "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The subjects of this kingdom have thus another relation besides that which they bear to their sovereign—a relation to their fellow-subjects. This relation is one of brotherhood. The one all-comprehending law of this heaven-born Utopia is love: "Love God, who is thy Father; love thy neighbor, who is thy brother. Love thy Father-God with all thy heart and strength; love thy neighbor-brother as thyself—as thou wouldst ask that he would love thee." All that Jesus said and taught concerning the righteousness of members of his new kingdom, in sermon, discourse, and parable, is summed up in "this royal law."<sup>1</sup>

This involves a relinquishment of one's

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<sup>1</sup>James ii. 8.

right of proprietorship in himself and all that is his. Indeed, Jesus with special emphasis declared that in order to be his disciple one must become dead to himself and all his desires and plans. With solemn predictions of his own death he immediately connects the declaration that his disciples are to follow him in taking up *their* cross, in laying down their lives. "If any man willeth to come after me [determines to be my disciple], let him renounce himself and take up his cross daily and *follow me* [in the act and spirit and habit of sacrifice], even unto death." "Taking up the cross" here means that for his sake and service, and the sake and service of humanity, we as really relinquish our claim and hold on life and all that life contains for us as we should do if we had already started under literal sentence of death to the place of execution. And this act of dying in the spirit of self-sacrifice is to be ratified and repeated each day (καθ' ἡμέραν, Luke ix. 23) in order to make

sure of its reality and continuity. For, constituted as we are, we can never remain in any one state unless we renew it and go deeper. We never are, we are always becoming. Only God is.

In still another passage Jesus teaches the same great fundamental truth of his kingdom, and in a vivid, pictorial way. Referring here also to his death, he uttered those beautiful and memorable words: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life, *loseth* it; and he that loseth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man be my servant, *let him follow me.*"<sup>1</sup> This, according to Jesus, is the meaning of discipleship, this the state and attitude of members of his new kingdom. The secret of Jesus, it has been said, is death into life and life out of death. Paul most vividly

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<sup>1</sup> John xii. 23-26.



describes his own realization of this ideal,<sup>1</sup> and everywhere teaches that this is the normal significance of discipleship.<sup>2</sup>

According to Jesus, the Master, and according to Paul, the disciple, the two elements of the act which makes a man a disciple of Christ and constitutes him a member of the kingdom of God are,

1. That he commit himself in trustful, filial confidence to God, as Father, to forgive, accept, save, and keep him.

2. That he commit himself to this norm of consecration and sacrifice—death to self, crucifixion to the world, a new spiritual life, to be lived in a new sphere, that is, of faith and love, and of service to God and man, the creature of God's love.

This is "the royal law,"<sup>3</sup> the law of the kingdom, comprehending all righteousness; and for us, enslaved as we are by nature,

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. vi. 3-11, especially.

<sup>3</sup> James ii. 8.

under the "law of sin and death,"<sup>1</sup> it is, no less, "the law of liberty."<sup>2</sup>

What is this kingdom of God then? How may it be defined? It is difficult and not always helpful to reduce a great truth to the terms of a logical definition. But we may consider some of the attempts that have been made to define the kingdom of God as conceived and expounded by Jesus.

The following is the definition of Professor Bruce: "It is the reign of divine love exercised by God in his grace over human hearts believing in his love and constrained thereby to yield him grateful affection and devoted service."<sup>3</sup>

Wendt gives the following: "The idea is of a divine dispensation under which God would bestow his full salvation upon a society of men, who, on their part, should fulfill his will in true righteousness."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 2.   <sup>2</sup> James i. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Kingdom of God, page 46.

<sup>4</sup> Teaching of Jesus, i. 175.

Principal Fairbairn has this form of statement: "The idea includes the notion of a reign, the reign of God in men and through men over mankind by means of ideals, of truths believed in and loved. These ideals and great creative truths of the kingdom are two: the paternity of God, the sonship of man. God is manlike; man is godlike."<sup>1</sup>

Another one has tersely said: "The kingdom of God is a spiritual congregation of souls born anew to God."<sup>2</sup>

If we may venture to offer a somewhat fuller statement, we submit the following:

The kingdom of God is that divine society which God, through Jesus, his Son, is organizing on earth, and in which God, as both Father and Sovereign, exercises do-

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<sup>1</sup> Studies in the Life of Christ, page 107.

<sup>2</sup> A useful and instructive statement of the principles of the kingdom of God may be found in Dr. Alexander Sutherland's work on The Kingdom of God, pages 52-64.

minion and rule in the souls and over the lives of its members; who, on their part, having entered it through repentance and faith and a renewal by God of their moral nature, render to him, as filial subjects, the obedience of a free and willing righteousness, both of heart and conduct: a reign of love which, while beginning in the inward life of the individual, realizes itself in all his social and civil relations and through him extends its sway over others, so that it is destined to take possession of and to transform the entire domain of human life, in this world, and to be consummated in a perfect and eternal state in the world to come.

## IX.

### **Jesus' Doctrine of God as Father.**

To Jesus God was Father. So dominant was this conception of God in the thought of Jesus, so fully had it taken possession of his mind, that it was his favorite and usual name for God. He does not speak of God so much as he speaks of "the Father," "my Father," "your Father," "our Father." The Gospels must be read through with this view before one can fully appreciate this extraordinary and significant fact. Jesus nowhere discusses or undertakes to establish the personality of God, nor does he once assert it in any formal way. He constructs no discourse, invents no parable, to teach or illustrate the omnipotence or the omniscience of God. He makes no argument for or exposition of the spirituality of God, and only once distinctly asserts it.

This was in his conversation with the Samaritan woman; and he did it then not in the interest of theology, but only because, in her ignorance of the spiritual nature of God, she had fallen into false and hurtful notions as to the localization or focalization of God, and thought he could be found and worshiped in one chosen place alone. He uttered no discourse, he spoke no word in the interest of a theory of God, or a system of theology. In fact, he was not a theologian. He was the Son of the heavenly Father, and his teachings were devoted to, and his life expended in, one consistent and continuous endeavor to persuade men that they also may become sons of his heavenly Father. But in order that we may understand just what he did teach as to the Fatherhood of God, it will be necessary to examine somewhat in detail his recorded sayings on this subject.

Two things are clear:

First: Jesus knew God as his Father.

To him God was not God so much as he was Father. This seemed to fill up his thought of God in his relation to himself. He did not conceive of God apart from that relation. He seemed to know God in no other relation, so far as he himself was concerned. When he addresses God in prayer or thanksgiving, he always addresses him, with one single exception, as Father. Only once did he ever address him as God, and that was in the strange cry that escaped his lips when he hung dying on the cross. Not only so, he never speaks of him as his God, except in the single instance where he says to Mary Magdalene, "Go and tell my disciples that I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."<sup>1</sup> He never speaks to God or of God as his Lord. For him God is Father.

Second: It is also clear that Jesus taught that God is, in some sense, the Father of

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<sup>1</sup>John xx. 17.

all or of some men. But here two important and difficult questions confront us: 1. Does Jesus represent God as the Father of all men, or only of some men? 2. In what sense does he teach that God is the Father of men?

It seems to be perfectly clear that Jesus did not teach that God is the Father of all men, or of some men, in the same sense in which he was his own Father. The contrary is asserted or implied in many things which he said. But we need to take only one or two instances, and these we take from the synoptic Gospels. In a striking expression of his self-consciousness, which is recorded by both Matthew<sup>1</sup> and Luke,<sup>2</sup> he says: "All things have been delivered unto me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 27. <sup>2</sup> Luke x. 22.



him." As much respecting the uniqueness of his Sonship is implied in a saying of his recorded in the other synoptic:<sup>1</sup> "But of that day or hour no one knoweth, not even the angels in heaven, neither *the Son*, but the Father."

And if the account of the supernatural conception of Jesus be true, as historically well attested and in accord with the demands of reason,<sup>2</sup> it is true from this point of view, as well as others, as we shall see later, that God was the Father of Jesus in a sense peculiar to himself.

Does Jesus then teach that God is the Father of all men in some other sense, in some lower sense, in any sense? Or does he teach that God is the Father of only some men? And in what sense?

It is commonly supposed, and it is now almost universally preached, that Jesus does teach that God is the Father of all men.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark xiii. 32. <sup>2</sup> See Study II.

The majority, perhaps, of the recent writers on the life and teachings of Jesus hold this view.<sup>1</sup> They seem to take it for granted. And yet it is not by any means clear or certain that Jesus did so teach. In any case, there is but one way of ascertaining what Jesus taught, and that is by a candid examination of what he actually said on the subject. It is a question that cannot be determined by philosophical preconceptions or a sentimental preference for that which commends itself to us as a beautiful theory of God. In this case these and all similar things go for little. That Jesus conceives of God as his own Father, and practically never speaks or thinks of him in any other way, is true. That Jesus represents God as kind in his providential care of all men, even the unrighteous and unthankful,

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Fairbairn in "Place of Christ in Modern Theology," Wendt's "Teaching of Jesus," Bruce's "Kingdom of God," Watson's "Mind of the Master."

as pitiful toward the lost, as long-suffering toward the obstinate, as desiring and providing for the salvation of all, and as rejoicing over a sinner that repenteth, is not denied and cannot be denied. That Jesus also teaches that God is the Father of some men, is equally certain. But that Jesus teaches that God bears the actual relation of Father to all men alike, is not by any means established or certain. If it is to be established, it can be only by an exegesis, critical and contextual, of his words. This, we fear, cannot be done.

It is commonly supposed that the Gospels are full of Jesus' references to God as the Father of men, and that the instances are numberless. On the contrary, an examination will reveal that the instances where he speaks of God as the Father of men at all, whether of some or all men, in any sense, are surprisingly few. *The majority of all these* instances are in the Sermon on the Mount, contained in chapters v.-vii. of

Matthew's Gospel. Besides the sixteen instances in the Sermon on the Mount, there are in St. Matthew only four others, making twenty in all. The one instance in Mark is identical with one of those in the Sermon on the Mount; and of the five instances in St. Luke, three, and probably four, are identical with as many in the Sermon on the Mount, and are therefore not to be added to the sixteen there found. There are therefore in the three synoptics only twenty-one or twenty-two instances altogether,<sup>1</sup> sixteen of which are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount.

These are all the instances in the synoptics<sup>2</sup> where Jesus speaks of God as in any sense the Father of any men, *including* those where he speaks to the disciples of God as "*your* Father." It will be found

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<sup>1</sup> These results we obtained from an examination of Moulton and Geden's Greek Concordance, if we made no mistake.

<sup>2</sup> The Gospel of John is considered later.

by an examination of these passages that in no one of them does Jesus say unequivocally that God is the Father of all men. It will be found, however, in the first place, that in almost if not quite all of them it is distinctly stated that he was addressing *his disciples*, and he spoke to them of God as "*your Father*." In the second place, in some if not most of them the immediate context and the connection will afford distinct and confirmatory evidence that he spoke of God not as the Father of all men, but only of a certain kind of men.

As to the Sermon on the Mount, we are told by both the evangelists who report it that it was addressed "to his disciples."<sup>1</sup> To be sure Matthew does say at the close of the discourse that "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching" (vii. 28). But

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 1: "His disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying." Luke vi. 20: "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said."

though this does imply that the crowds heard him, the writer does not say that he *directed* his teaching to them, as he does say at the beginning of the discourse that his disciples came unto him and he taught *them*, saying, etc. "A lawyer in a court room *addresses* the jury or the judge, though he may be *heard* by a multitude who are present as spectators."

St. Luke, recording some things omitted by Matthew, curiously reports certain "woes" parenthetically *addressed* to those who were not disciples, and, by the language applied to them, could not be disciples in any sense.<sup>1</sup>

But let us examine the first place in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus speaks to men of God as their Father, "your Father." "Even so let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good

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<sup>1</sup> This parenthesis should be read (Luke vi. 24-26) and remembered. It is paralleled in the address in Matt. xxiii. 8-12, to be considered later, p. 170.

works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16.) In this place men in general are spoken of as distinguished from those who are addressed as having a Father in heaven. If he had meant to teach that God is the Father of all men, it seems that he should have said, “that they may see your good works, and glorify *their* Father which is in heaven.” Conversely, if he had said, “that they may see your good works, and glorify *their* Father in heaven,” it would have seemed plain that he meant to teach that God is the Father of men in general.

In Matt. v. 44, 45, he says: “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.” Here again two classes appear—the persons addressed, of whom God is the Father, and the enemies and persecutors of these. An unbiased, disinterested reader would hardly conclude from this passage that God is to

be understood as the Father of the enemies and persecutors also.

The words that immediately follow, "because he maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust," have often been cited to prove that God is the Father of the evil as well as the good, the unjust as well as the just. But they prove no such thing. The thought is simply this: You are to be good to the wicked persons who persecute you, just as God is good to the evil and the unjust; for you as his children are to be like your Father. Herein you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. In another part of the Sermon on the Mount (vi. 26-30) Jesus has drawn a beautiful and impressive picture of God's care of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Now if God's sending his sunshine and rain on the unrighteous and the evil proves that he is their Father, then God's care of the birds and the lilies proves that



he is the Father of birds and lilies, as his noting of every sparrow that falls would prove that he is the Father of sparrows.<sup>1</sup>

In vi. 1-18 he warns his disciples against giving alms, praying and fasting for the purpose of securing the praise of men, as certain persons do, whom he calls "hypocrites." Are we to suppose that he means to say, or to leave it to be implied from what he says, that God is the Father of these hypocrites as he is of those whom, as his disciples, he is instructing to give alms, to fast and pray, only that they may please their heavenly Father? On the contrary, it seems he intends a contrast between these hypocrites and those whose Father God is.

With reference to prayer in particular he says (Matt. vi. 7 ff.): "And in praying use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 29.

much speaking.” In *contrast* with them<sup>1</sup> you have a Father who knoweth “what things ye have need of before ye ask him.” “*You*,<sup>2</sup> therefore, are to pray thus.” He then proceeds to give them the so-called Lord’s Prayer, in which God is invoked as Father. This has been called “the universal prayer,” *i. e.*, the prayer that all men may use. A thorough study and comprehension of it will make it clear that it is the prayer of those who are genuine disciples of Jesus, and that no others can really pray it, no matter who they are, or how many, that “say” it.<sup>3</sup>

In the only remaining instance in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus speaks to men of God as their Father—though it was addressed to the disciples—there is

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<sup>1</sup> Exactly the same contrast is involved in verse 32 of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The pronoun is expressed in Greek, giving emphasis—the emphasis, clearly, of contrast.

<sup>3</sup> See Study X. on the Model Prayer.

nothing in the connection implying a contrast with men in general. (Matt. vii. 11.) The sayings in Matt. x. 20, 29 are part of the instructions given to "his twelve disciples" (Matt. x. 1) when he sent them out on their first mission. In verse 16 ff. he says: "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Beware of men; for they shall deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they shall scourge you, and shall bring you before governors and kings. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of *your Father* that speaketh in you." Here they are contrasted with "men" as sheep with wolves. It is difficult to conceive of a more violent contrast; and are we to believe that Jesus, at the time he spoke these words, had it in his mind that God was the Father of both classes alike? Though there is no contrast drawn between his disciples and other men in verse 29, yet this also is a part

of his instructions specifically given to "his twelve disciples."

In Matt. xiii. 43, where he says the righteous shall shine forth in the kingdom of *their Father*, it is specified that it is the righteous whose Father God is. In Matt. xxiii. 9 Jesus says: "And call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven." The context in this instance seems to imply that these words were spoken to a promiscuous audience; for in verse 1 it is said, "Then spake Jesus *to the multitudes* and to his disciples, saying," etc. At any rate, this is the *only* instance in which Jesus is reported to have used such words in addressing a mixed multitude. But upon closer examination we find that the language which he uses in verses 8-12 is such as he is accustomed to use in speaking to his disciples, and it was not his custom to so speak to promiscuous multitudes. All the pronouns in verses 8 and 9 are emphatic, indicating

contrast between those addressed and others in general. More specifically, though he had good reason to warn the people in general against the hypocrisy of the rabbis and Pharisees, as he does in the opening of the discourse, he had no reason to warn the people composing the crowds against being called rabbi; but, as his disciples, and especially his apostles, were to become teachers, and were in training for that very purpose, he had good reason to put them on their guard against the conceit of being revered and saluted as "my great and honorable master." But if it be said that some note of the transition would have been made if he turned from the multitude to address his disciples in particular, we may find, by reference to verse 13, that he does there *specifically direct* his words to the *rabbis and Pharisees*, and yet no note is made of the transition. We have seen that similarly in Luke vi. 24 the address which is explicitly said (in verse 20) to have

been directed to the disciples is abruptly changed to others, not disciples, without any note of the transition.

In the only instance in St. Mark (xi. 25) where Jesus speaks to men of God as their (your) Father, the language is part of a private talk which he is giving "the twelve" (compare verse 11) as they go from Bethany to Jerusalem.

There are only four or five instances in St. Luke. The saying in vi. 36 is a part of Luke's report of the Sermon on the Mount, and is by Luke (vi. 20) explicitly said to have been addressed to "his disciples." So also the sayings in Luke xi. 2, 13, the first of which is the address of the so-called Lord's Prayer, which has been noticed already.

The two remaining instances in St. Luke are in chapter xii. 30, 32. While the first verse of this chapter indicates that there was a great crowd about him on this occasion, in verse 22 we are explicitly told that

“he said unto his disciples” that which follows through verses 30 and 32. Besides, the language of these two verses is itself such as could be addressed to none but his disciples: “And *you* [emphatic], do not you seek what to eat and drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind; for all these things do the nations of the world seek after, but *your* [emphatic again] Father knoweth that ye need these things. But seek his kingdom,” etc. “Fear not, *little flock*; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” In verse 30 the apostles are strongly contrasted with the heathen, and the contrast *consists in the fact* that God is the Father of the disciples: *Your* Father (*i. e.*, *you* have a Father who) knows that you need these things. But any remaining doubt as to the exclusive reference to the disciples is removed by the unambiguous words, “*little flock*,” which is his affectionate way of here addressing his disciples.

We have now examined all the passages

in the synoptic Gospels where, according to the text of Westcott and Hort, Jesus has anything to say of God as the Father of men. In every case it is fairly certain that he was speaking to those who had become his disciples. And we know that in Jesus' mind and according to Jesus' teaching the difference between those who were his true disciples and those who were not was the difference between wisdom and folly, between light and darkness, between life and death.

Taking up the Gospel of John, there are only two instances that need to be examined in detail. These are in John iv. 21-23 and John xx. 17. For though the phrase "the Father," which occurs frequently in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John, is certainly in several of these places to be understood not of God's relation to Jesus only, but also of his relation to others with Jesus, we have only to recall that these chapters contain the farewell address of Jesus,



spoken to the eleven alone in the privacy of the upper room, and in the intimacy of a sympathy and union between him and them, deeper and tenderer now than at any previous stage of their discipleship.

The words in John xx. 17 were spoken to Mary Magdalene by the Lord about his disciples, whom he calls his "brethren." "Go," he says, "unto my brethren and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and *your Father.*"

The only remaining passage in the four Gospels is to be found in John iv. 21-23, and it is a part of the interview of Jesus with the woman of Samaria: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers." Here, as in many other cases, the context seems to supply an an-

swer to the question whether Jesus in this instance means to teach that God is the Father of all men without distinction. For he says *the genuine worshipers* shall worship the Father. Meyer, the greatest of commentators, in the interest of pure exegesis, says what is practically equivalent to this: "The word Father is here used from the standpoint of the future converts, to whom God, through their faith in the Reconciler, *would be* Father."<sup>1</sup>

So far is Jesus from teaching or saying that God is the Father of all men, there is in the Gospel of John one passage where Jesus virtually says that he is *not* the Father of certain men; and if there are some men of whom God is not Father, he is not the Father of all men. The Jews explicitly claim and assert (John viii. 41), "We have one Father, even God." Jesus replies (verse 42), "If God were your Father, ye

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer on John iv. 21.

would love me." They surely did not love Jesus—the conclusion followed: God *was not their Father*. But to make it still stronger he says, continuing (verse 44), "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." While no stress is laid on his calling them children of the devil, which may here be a figure of speech, yet surely great violence must be done this language to maintain in face of it that Jesus held that God was the Father of those to whom he addressed it.

If now we examine those passages where Jesus speaks of men as the "sons of God," we shall find that in every case the expression is restricted, and does not in any instance include all men. According to Matt. v. 9, it is not all men, but the peacemakers who shall be called sons of God. In v. 44, 45 it is those who love their enemies and pray for their persecutors that are spoken of as the sons of God. It is the same thought in Luke vi. 35, and it is ex-

pressed in almost the same language. In Luke xx. 35, 36, where he says, "They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection of the dead . . . are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection," the phrase is clearly limited in extent and does not apply to all men. In John i. 12 and xi. 52, though it is the evangelist's thought and not that of Jesus, the word applies only to a select class indicated in the context. These are the only instances in the four Gospels where men are spoken of as the sons or the children of God.

There is not, then, a single passage in all the four Gospels that makes it certain or even probable that Jesus taught the universal Fatherhood of God, unless it be the parable of the prodigal son. This is indeed the *locus classicus* for the doctrine and for those who hold it. And it is such a beautiful parable, apparently supporting such a beautiful doctrine of God, that one is very loath to give up this interpretation of it. But it must be

remembered that it is only a parable, and that it is one of three parables spoken on the same occasion and for the purpose of teaching the same lesson. The one lesson which they teach is that men, though lost, are of unspeakable value in the sight of God; that it was lost men that Jesus came to save, and therefore Jesus in associating with publicans and sinners for the purpose of saving them was doing the thing which above all others was pleasing to God, however it might seem to the Pharisees and the rabbis.<sup>1</sup>

But it is manifestly unscientific, unexegetical, and simply inconsistent to claim that one of these parables is to be taken literally and all its details to be literally interpreted and pressed, while in the other two this must not be done. If we are to infer from the third of this group of parables that God is literally the universal Father and that all

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<sup>1</sup> Read Luke xv. 1-3.

men are his children, are we not bound to infer from the first, namely, that of the lost sheep, that God is literally a shepherd and all men literally sheep?

“ God is indeed called a shepherd in the Old Testament, and every one feels the beauty and pertinency of the designation. But if, *on the strength of this parable*, one should undertake to establish the doctrine of the essential shepherdhood of God and the essential sheephood of men, we should begin to inquire into his sanity. Still worse would be the case, if, in interpreting the second of the group of parables, one should infer the essential womanhood of God and the essential coinhood of man. In the third parable, Jesus, instead of illustrating by means of a shepherd and his sheep, or by a woman and her coins, tells a story in which a father and his son figure as the leading characters. The same truth is taught as before. But why should we insist on doing here what, in the interpretation of the other

two parables, would be impossible and absurd? Precisely the same lesson might have been illustrated by a story of a wife deserting her husband and afterwards returning in penitence and being graciously received back by her husband. But we should not in that case conclude that husbandhood is 'the final idea of God,' or wifehood that of man. Yet such a conclusion would be as legitimate as to infer from the parable of the prodigal son that God is essentially the Father of all men, and that all men are essentially the children of God. If there are elsewhere express declarations of the alleged real Fatherhood of God, well and good; but this *parable* can be made to furnish neither proof nor disproof of it. . . . Instead of interpreting the parable in accordance with the plainer and unmistakable purport of all the rest of the New Testament, we are actually told that everything in the New Testament which conflicts or seems to conflict with the doctrine of the universal Father-

hood of God and the universal sonship of man, must be interpreted or corrected according to the *alleged* meaning of the one parable.”<sup>1</sup>

As far as we have been able to discover, Jesus does not teach the Fatherhood of God in the sense in which this doctrine is attributed to him by recent authors, already referred to. On the other hand, if we are not mistaken, there is in all the passages where he speaks of God as Father of men something either in the situation or the context or the language itself which restricts this relation to a certain kind and class of men. This class consists of those who are *bona fide* disciples of Jesus, whose conception of him is such that they have in spirit, but in sincerity, left all that they may follow him; whose estimate of the kingdom of God is such that, like the merchant finding “one

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<sup>1</sup> Article in *American Journal of Theology*, July, 1897, pp. 597-599, by Charles M. Mead, Hartford Theological Seminary.



pearl of great price," they "go and sell all they have" that they may possess themselves of it. It consists of those who, like Jesus, are filial in spirit and at heart obedient to the will of their Father, notwithstanding many superficial crudities and imperfections. On one occasion when Jesus was told that his mother and brothers wished to confer with him and were calling for him, he was so moved that, breaking his usual habit of quietness and bodily repose, he stretched out his hand toward his disciples and uttered that significant and profound saying: "Behold my mother and brothers; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother."<sup>1</sup> That is, there were some men who stood in a closer relation to himself than his own brothers, and even his own mother, according to the flesh. In other words, even his own brothers and mother

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 49, 50; Mark iii. 33-35; Luke viii. 20, 21.

according to the flesh were not necessarily included in, but might be excluded from, this relationship of brotherhood with himself, which is the correlate on the human side of the Fatherhood of God. It would be difficult to make or even conceive a more strongly stated contrast than is here made by Jesus between those who were in reality his disciples, on the one hand, and men in general, on the other; and this contrast is expressed in terms of brotherhood with Jesus on the part of these disciples, which clearly implies the relation of God to them as Father, and seems to limit this relation to them.

This examination of what Jesus said on the subject in hand leads to the conclusion that Jesus did not teach that God is the Father of all men, but that he is the Father of those who were like Jesus.

In his excellent article on "Jesus Christ" in the new Dictionary of the Bible, Dr. Sanday says: "Jesus selects two of the most familiar of all relations to be the types

round which he groups his teaching in regard to God and man—the family and the organized state: God stands to man in the relation at once of Father and King.”<sup>1</sup> This is strikingly said; and it is true, but not in the unrestricted application to man as man, which the able author seems to intend. For it is nowhere and by nobody seriously claimed that Jesus represents all men alike as members of the kingdom of God and God as the King of all men. It will probably be admitted by all that Jesus himself did not speak of all men as included in the *kingdom* of God. But is it not true that the *family* of God is composed of the same class of persons and the same persons of whom his kingdom is composed? In other words, God is Father to the same class of persons to whom he is King. Why, in thinking of God as King, King of those

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<sup>1</sup>Dictionary of the Bible (Hastings), art. “Jesus Christ.”

who constitute his kingdom, should we restrict that relation to a certain limited portion of mankind, and in thinking of him as Father extend *that* relation to *all* mankind? What consistency is there in this? What warrant have we for it? We have none in the teachings of Jesus, as it appears from the detailed examination which we have just now made of his sayings concerning God as Father.

Some of those who hold that Jesus taught the universal Fatherhood of God seem to feel this inconsistency, and they appear to have misgivings as to the certainty of their view, and of the moral fitness of the doctrine as well. We quote from two of its ablest advocates: "God is *in a special sense* the Father of believers, disciples of Christ. In the uncertainty which attends the exact circumstances of many of his discourses, it may be often doubtful as to *how far* the phrase  $\delta \text{ πατήρ υμῶν}$  (your Father) extends *beyond these*. Probably, as a rule, its ap-

plication starts from the inner circle. But it is also *probably* not confined to this. . . . All those to whom Jesus speaks are *potential* disciples.”<sup>1</sup> As to the moral fitness of the doctrine, another of its ablest advocates seems to feel misgivings, and thinks it necessary to make important qualifications and distinctions. Dr. Bruce, in his instructive and stimulating work on “The Kingdom of God,” has this to say: “The Fatherhood of God as announced by Jesus, while having reference to all, *does not mean the same thing for all.* . . . Hence in studying the doctrine of God’s paternal love, *we must have regard to moral distinctions.* We must ask *what it means* for sinners, and *what for saints, for men in general, and for the children* of the kingdom.”<sup>2</sup> The implication here seems to be that if we do not have regard to moral distinctions, the doctrine that

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<sup>1</sup> Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, vol. ii. 209, art. “God,” by W. Sanday.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce, The Kingdom of God, p. 110.

God is Father to all men tends to produce a spirit of antinomianism. And this is true. To the depraved and vicious, to the self-centered and selfish, it gives a feeling of security and of license. It relieves them of that most salutary, if not absolutely necessary, constituent of the normal moral nature, the sense of the fear of God.<sup>1</sup> Hearing this doctrine universally proclaimed as if it were the theological axiom underlying all truth, bad men, impenitent men, say within themselves, "If this is true, if God is Father to all men, then we are as well off as others." In spite of qualifications and distinctions and warnings, the doctrine that God is Father to all means this to the average man of the world; and if it is qualified and explained so as not to mean this, it means nothing, at least nothing that he cares for.

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<sup>1</sup> Only recently the writer has read two articles on "The Lost Sense of the Fear of God."

On the other hand, to the righteous this doctrine has a tendency to cheapen the highest thing. If it be true, they are tempted to feel: "If God is Father to all men, then we are no better off than others. After all our struggles, self-denials, sacrifices, sufferings, we are no more to God and God no more to us than those who live in ease and know nothing of struggle and sacrifice. Why, then, endure what we may just as well escape? Why should we crucify the flesh, if God is the same to those who indulge the flesh?" It is not from a feeling of envy or of disappointment at finding that God is Father to all men, yet they do, under the effect of the insistent proclamation of this doctrine, imperceptibly, unconsciously, yield to the inevitable tendency, lower their standard of self-denial, self-mastery, and sacrifice, and relax their zeal in the service of God and man. The ethical tendencies and effects of the doctrine seem to confirm the result of our examina-

tion of the sayings and teachings of Jesus on this subject. The doctrine of Jesus is that God is the Father of those who compose the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

But in what sense is this to be understood? Is it true in any real sense, or is it only a figurative form of speech signifying that the disposition and attitude of God toward the righteous are analogous to the disposition and attitude of a human father toward his children? Are the righteous the children of God, and he their Father only in the sense

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<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be the correct view of the exact teaching of Jesus concerning God's Fatherhood, one thing is true and sure: According to his teachings any man who feels a sense of spiritual orphanage and wants God for his Father, may have and may realize the blessedness of conscious sonship on condition of surrendering himself trustfully to God and turning resolutely and decisively away from whatever is contrary to God, as many who have put it to the test can bear witness. In other words, according to Jesus' teaching, God is potentially the Father of all men—all men may *become* sons of God.



of ethical likeness? This is the view of some. But the language and tone of Jesus certainly seem to involve more than this. It is impossible to read his words in the Sermon on the Mount, in the farewell discourse (John xiv., xv., xvi.), and elsewhere, without feeling that he means something deeper and more real than a mere metaphor. He certainly means more than a figure of speech in calling God his own Father. If so, how are we to know that he intends it only as a figure of speech when he speaks habitually and constantly of God as the Father of his disciples, unless he gives us some means of knowing this, which he does not do?

The essential element of fatherhood is the fact of procreation. In one instance Jesus uses the word which exactly expresses the essential element of real fatherhood. In the conversation with Nicodemus he says: "Except a man be born [or begot-

ten<sup>1</sup>] anew, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” “That which is born [or begotten] of the Spirit is spirit.” These passages from the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus are the main, though by no means the only, biblical ground for the Christian doctrine of what we call *regeneration*. Indeed, the conditions required for entrance into God’s kingdom *and family*, as we have studied them, and the absolute standards of righteousness held up for members by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses and parables in the synoptic Gospels, *imply* a change which is radical, thoroughgoing, revolutionary, which amounts in fact to nothing less than the transformation of the moral nature of man. It is equally implied by the radical, essential difference which Jesus habitually teaches there is between those who were his true disciples and those who were not, those

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<sup>1</sup>The same word γεννάω properly means to beget. See treatment of the word in Thayer’s Lexicon.

who were in the kingdom of God and those who were excluded from the kingdom. Indeed, he explicitly says in Matt. xviii. 3, "Except you turn and acquire a moral disposition similar to the nature of little children, you will not even enter the kingdom." This is Meyer's translation, and he adds: "*The divine agent* in this moral change is the Holy Spirit." See also Matt. vi. 17, where Jesus says that righteousness is the product of a sound inner state, and develops from within outward, from heart to conduct, as a tree that is good by nature brings forth good fruit. The doctrine of regeneration by the agency of God is common in John's first Epistle, and is taught by both Paul and Peter, and perhaps even by James.

The fact that Jesus teaches that men are "begotten" of God unto spiritual life *in this specific form*, in only one place, is no presumption against its being his conception of the vital relation of God to his spiritual chil-

dren. As we have said, Jesus did not teach for the purpose of furnishing the materials for a system and science of theology and soteriology. He taught the actual men and women with whom he came in contact, in accordance with their condition, capacity, and needs. Only once, as we have seen, did he explicitly declare that God is spirit. But this fact does not make it a matter of doubt whether Jesus held the essential spirituality of the nature of God.

The nature and mode of the process by which God exercises the energetic creative activity of his Spirit in the production of spiritual life in the believer is beyond our ken. But it may be instructive to quote the words of a great theological teacher, who uses language that expresses the essential facts without distinct allusion to the thought of procreation: "According to the teaching of Jesus, sonship to God is a participation of his [Jesus'] own unique relation to the Father, and it becomes ours *through the im-*

*partation of a new life from God*, in the strength of which we are *enabled* to renounce our self-centered life. God's sons are those who trust him and are like him; and that for us implies a *great change of mind and heart*, a turning our back on our worldly selves, such as can be effected *only under the influence of a power from God!*"<sup>1</sup> Sonship, then, does not consist in ethical likeness only, but also in a change wrought in the nature and character by the direct agency of God, which is the antecedent and cause of ethical likeness to God.

NOTE.—Thayer, in his treatment of the word *πατήρ*, has this to say: "In John's use of the term it seems to include the additional idea of one who by the power of his Spirit *has begotten them anew* to a life of holiness." Then, on the word *γεννάω* (to "beget"), he says: "It is used peculiarly in the Gospel and first Epistle of John, of God conferring upon men the nature and disposition of sons, *imparting to them spiritual life*." All which implies that sonship is more and deeper than ethical likeness, though of course it includes it.

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Candlish.

## X.

### The Daily Prayer of God's Child.

HAVING now some conception of the central truth of the revelation given by Jesus that God is Father, and of the new order of society that was to be established upon the basis of this truth, we are better prepared to understand that remarkable form of prayer which Jesus gave his disciples. Indeed, the full scope and meaning of that prayer can be comprehended only in the light of these two fundamental principles of Jesus' revelation. Thus it is that, while everybody knows this form of prayer by heart, and many recite it every day, it is little understood, and the daily rehearsal of it has come to be an example of the vain repetitions which Jesus condemned at the time when he gave this form of prayer.

While we can conceive that Jesus him-  
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self could offer every petition of this prayer, with one exception, that exception renders it improper that it should be called the Lord's Prayer. Certainly it is the Lord's Prayer in the sense that he is the author and giver of it; but it would be more appropriate to name it with reference, not to him who gave it, but to those for whom it was designed and to whom it was given. It would be manifestly better to call it the disciples' prayer than the Lord's Prayer. But in view of the fundamental truth that Jesus taught, and of the fact that this relation between God and man is put in the forefront of the prayer and implied throughout, it would be better still to call it, what in fact it *is*, "The prayer of God's child."

If Jesus taught anything, he taught that God is not God only, but that he is Father. It is with this conception and impression of him, then, that the true suppliant is to approach him in prayer. He is to think of him, believe in him, and call on him as Fa-

ther. There is a profound significance in the fact of Jesus' teaching, that in approaching God in prayer we are not to approach him as God, but as Father. It is in the mood and act of prayer that divine things become most real to us. It is therefore all the more significant that Jesus instructed us, when approaching the Deity in the mood and act of prayer, to say "Father."

And when this word is said, when it is said with a full comprehension of its meaning and a full realization of the blessed mutual relationship which it implies, the whole prayer is already said. For every thought of the prayer and every petition of the prayer is already naturally involved in, and flows naturally out of, the conception which is expressed in the address—our Father.

God is to be prayed to, then, not as God, but as Father; and yet the freedom of approach, and the spirit of confidence which this conception of God should inspire, are to be reverently and religiously guarded from



begetting presumption or degenerating into irreverence. We are to remind ourselves in the same breath that, while first of all he is Father, he is also God, the Holy, the Eternal, the Unsearchable, the Absolute: his very name is by his children to be sanctified and held in lowly and adoring reverence. First Father, but then God. He is to be approached and trusted as Father; he is to be revered and worshiped as God. Already before Jesus came, men feared and worshiped him as God, though as the unknown God. What was not known was that he is Father. By nature men are disposed to dread him as God, and by nature equally indisposed to think of him and trust in him as Father. That he *is* to be looked upon and trusted in as Father, was therefore to be put first and emphasized most; that he is still God, and to be held in sacred though loving reverence and awe, is never to be forgotten. On the whole, it is less likely that men will be led into presump-

tion by the idea of Father than that they will be driven into servile dread or repelled altogether by the bare idea of God.

“The worshiper who invokes God under the name of Father, and realizes the gracious, beneficent love of God, must at the same time remember and recognize God’s glorious majesty, which is neither annulled nor impaired, but should rather be supremely intensified through his fatherly love. An appeal to God as Father, if not associated with reverent homage before the divine majesty, would betray a want of understanding of the character of God.”<sup>1</sup>

But if he is Father, then are we children, and the prayer proceeds upon this consequence, unquestioningly assumed. And if children, then loyal, filial, loving, obedient, as children in any true and real sense are. To such a child the father’s will is the highest law, to fulfill the father’s will his chief de-

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt, i. 304.

sire, to bring to pass his father's plans his first pursuit. It is not first his own pleasure and then his father's will; it is not first his own comfort and then his father's wish; it is not first his own necessities and then his father's plan.

Now if the teachings of Jesus furnish to us any revelation or interpretation of the mind of God, God has a plan—a plan on which he has set his heart, to which he has devoted the energies and resources of his nature. For the accomplishment of this purpose all his revelations have been made; for the realization of this plan his highest activities have been put in motion. History is witness that all history looks toward it. History has its solution in it and no meaning apart from it. For if history has *any* meaning, it is this; if it hasn't *this* meaning, it hasn't any, so far as has been discovered. The future accomplishment of this plan of the Father will be a justification of history with its failures, its tragedies, its agonies, a

theodicy of creation with its groanings and travailings, and its anguish of suspense endured while waiting and longing for the revelation and realization of a consummation that hath not yet appeared.

This consummation is the coming of the kingdom of God, of God the Father, so that his will shall be done by his filial and faithful children over the whole round world as it is done in heaven. For "the kingdom is a chief end for God, and he makes all things subservient to its interests."<sup>1</sup>

If this beneficent plan is first in the mind of the Father, it may well be, and will be, first in the hearts of his true children, as it was first in the heart and life of the ideal Son; for his manifestation, humiliation, and obedience unto death had in view this one purpose of the Father. First of all, then, the Father's child will pray, not for earthly

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 121.

comfort or temporal good, nor yet for necessary bread, but first for the Father's reign of love in the hearts and over the lives of men, which, being interpreted, is the coming of the kingdom of God. The spirit of the prayer is thus in accord with what Jesus elsewhere and uniformly teaches concerning the primacy and supremacy of the kingdom of God, as, *e. g.*, when he says, "Seek *first* the kingdom and righteousness of God," and God will make your daily wants his care.

Whoever, then, understands this prayer and *prays* this prayer in reality, has risen above the consideration of selfish interests, has escaped from the domination of self-love, has become one in spirit and purpose and pursuit with God's ideal Son, and has identified himself and his all with God's "increasing plan which through the ages runs."

Was ever such dignity ascribed to man? Was ever such value put upon him? Was

ever such blessedness made possible to him and brought within his reach? To one who has realized the meaning of all this, it is small matter about temporal good, personal comfort, or even daily bread. Such a one can say with the ideal Son, "My meat is to do my Father's will and to accomplish his work." To one who has realized in experience this union with God and this absorption in his will and plan, and who knows the blessedness which it brings, starvation itself would seem a lesser evil than the disruption of this union and the forfeiture of this blessedness. It was so with the ideal Son when in the wilderness of the temptation he chose to endure the pangs of an extreme hunger rather than disobey his Father's will or break with his Father's plan. The rule which he laid down for others he himself observed without deviation or exception: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength." Likewise every true child of the Father will

desire first what the Father wills, and for this will first pray.

But, though this is first of all, it is not all. Not that the other petitions of the prayer are not according to the Father's will, but they pertain more directly to the wants of the child-suppliant, and not so entirely to the Father's will.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” The child of God is not authorized to ask for long life or for riches, neither of which may be for his highest good, but only for the portion of bread which is for the day, which in the wisdom of God is needed for present sustenance. But for *this* the child of God may pray with the utmost confidence; for what father is there among men who, when his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? And if men, though being essentially evil, know how to give what is good to their children, will not the Father in heaven, who is essentially good, give what is good to those who are his own? Such

is the reasoning which Jesus himself constructs in his Sermon on the Mount, in order to awaken the confidence of men in the care of their heavenly Father. In fact, a greater portion of that matchless discourse is devoted to proving and illustrating the certainty of God's providential care for the temporal wants of his children than to any other topic, except the righteousness of members of his kingdom. Anxiety about supplies for our temporal wants is perhaps the commonest of the ills that flesh is heir to, and it certainly is one of the commonest hindrances to religion. Among those who have passed the line of middle life it is perhaps commoner than sin itself. In recognition of this, Jesus took special pains to remove the grounds of this anxiety, that men might trust in the care of their heavenly Father and serve him without distraction. The poorest of God's children may offer this petition with confidence—confidence in *God*, who has all power and sufficiency, in



whose hands are the forces and processes of nature, the events of time, and the hearts of men; confidence in the *Father* who will do what is best for his child. In this prayer we have the pledge that our bread and water shall be sure, and in this pledge the means of throwing off that burdensome anxiety which is one of the greatest ills of life, and one of the greatest hindrances to the kingdom of God. Martin Luther is reported to have said that he loved poverty because it kept him near to God. But if the poor may offer this prayer with filial confidence in God as their Father, the rich have need to offer it in recognition and acknowledgment of their daily dependence on the God whose power can make, as his providence has made, rich men poor in a single day.

Following this is the petition for the forgiveness of sins. Though it is the child whose prayer this is, the loyal, filial child, whose will is conformed to the Father's will,

the highest goal of whose aspirations is the coming of the kingdom of his Father, and who, like the ideal Son, is dedicated to this end; yet, unlike the ideal Son, he is conscious of falling short, in his daily life, of the full and complete discharge of his obligations and duties. He may even be conscious of positive offenses against God's holy will and God's holy law of love. He needs therefore to repent and to seek forgiveness. For the consciousness of sonship does not destroy the distinction between right and wrong, nor hinder the prompt recognition of wrong when it is present. On the contrary, a true son is the readiest to see his own shortcomings and wrongdoings, and to seek forgiveness. Those who have realized sonship and its blessed consequence of conscious fellowship with the Father, will be most ready of all men to repent of any act or temper that may have broken off or interrupted this fellowship, and to seek forgiveness, and with it the renewal of their

fellowship with the Father. And just as surely as a son thus seeks forgiveness, just so surely will the Father grant it and restore his peace. This petition distinctly involves two things: the possibility of man's sinning, and the pledge of God's forgiving.

The addition, "as we have forgiven<sup>1</sup> those who trespass against us," is in harmony with the spirit of the prayer as expressive throughout of the blessed relationship of child and Father. The essence of sonship consists in moral and spiritual likeness to the Father. And of the heavenly Father's readiness to forgive, and joy in forgiving, we have a vivid representation in Jesus' parable of the Unmerciful Servant, and still more so in his matchless parable of the Forgiving Father, commonly called the parable of the Prodigal Son. What, then, is the meaning of the added clause? Is it intended to make God's forgiving grace depend on man's willingness

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<sup>1</sup> Note the tense.

to forgive? This is contrary to all the representations that Jesus gives of the freeness of the Father's forgiving love and saving grace.

Indeed, in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (already referred to), he teaches that in the boundless pardoning grace of God, in which all true disciples have a part, lies the very motive to the duty of forgiving their brethren. (Matt. xviii. 21-35.) And if they do not fulfill this duty, they thereby render themselves unworthy of the *grace they have already received*, and God will cut them off from further enjoyment of it. We are to remember in prayer the duty of forgiving, not in order to merit divine grace by the fulfillment of that duty, but in order *not to forfeit* the grace of God by *the neglect* of it. The child would forfeit the grace of God by refusing to forgive, just as he would by any other sin persisted in. All who would enjoy and *retain* the blessing of God must seek to fulfill the will of God.

But whoever cherishes feelings of hatred and revenge against his brother acts in direct opposition to the will of God, and cannot retain God's love and enjoy God's forgiveness. Hence the heart must be free from all hateful and revengeful impulses and feelings. If he has hitherto borne hatred and enmity toward his fellow-men who have wronged him, this violation of his own duty toward them forms a part of the debt for which the suppliant must ask God's forgiveness. And he cannot get remission of this debt or of any other sin until he has eradicated the last remnant of hatred and enmity from his heart.<sup>1</sup>

If God is our Father, other men are our brothers. If God is fatherly enough to forgive us our offenses, we, if we are his sons, will surely be enough like him to forgive his other sons, who are our brothers. In needing forgiveness from God we are on a level

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt, i. 309.

with our offending brothers who need forgiveness from us. If we are to receive forgiveness from God, it is on the same principle on which an offending brother is to receive forgiveness from us.

It is noteworthy that this added clause is the only item of the prayer to which Jesus returns and which he makes the subject of comment at the close. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you your trespasses; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses." This is perhaps because of the great difficulty of fulfilling this condition. For to forgive those who have injured us is one of the most difficult of duties.

As the first petitions of this comprehensive and profound prayer lift the petitioner out of the domain of self-love, as it is opposed to God, and identify him with God's gracious plan of bringing all men into his

kingdom, this petition involves what is perhaps the highest reach of self-renouncing love toward men—the forgiveness of injuries and of enemies.

The next petition is properly translated, “Bring us not into temptation.” It has no reference to the idea of enticement to sin. God is not tempted by evil, neither tempts he any man to evil. In order to escape the implication involved in this misunderstanding of the petition, some have taken it to mean, “Suffer us not to be brought into temptation.” If that had been the thought, it could easily have been so expressed. The language actually used, however, hardly admits of such an interpretation. The meaning seems rather to be this: Bring us not, in the course of thy providence, into situations or circumstances which would be the source of trial or temptation, which would lay upon us too great a test of faith or endurance, which would in any way put our spiritual welfare in jeopardy. To express it more

concretely: Bring us not into any position of prominence or popularity or power, such as would be fraught with peril to the higher interests of the soul; bring us not into the possession of riches, if thou seest the possession of riches would endanger the reality and the single-heartedness and the strength of our devotion to thee; bring us not into the society of those who are great or powerful or cultivated or courtly or brilliant or beautiful, if thereby we should encounter influences tending to draw us away from righteousness and thee; bring us not into any circumstances or into association with any person or class of persons that would put our souls in peril.

The feeling or conviction out of which this petition, if offered with any sincerity, rises, would lead the suppliant to take the utmost pains to *keep himself* out of such situations and relations as would endanger his spiritual state and welfare. It would prompt him to flee from them with a



wholesome dread, if by any chance or mischance he found himself in the midst of them. We are not likely to escape from pleasant danger of our own seeking or consenting, or to resist temptation of our own procuring.

This prayer therefore sometimes implies action, vigorous, intense, decisive action. There are times when such action is more really prayer than all the forms of speech that men devise. There are times when *nothing* is prayer *but* such vigorous, decisive action. If we find ourselves, whether by accident or otherwise, in situations or under influences that excite evil passions, it is prayer to get away from these. Anything else at such a time is not prayer, it is a delusion or a mockery. So much does it mean to *pray* this prayer. This simple petition, then, has this profound significance and this far-reaching application. The principle involved is more decisive than any other for the cultivation of all the virtues

and the attainment of righteous character. This petition properly understood is a prayer for security from temptations that come from without, that spring out of our circumstances and external conditions.

The next and last petition is perhaps best understood as a prayer for security from the malice and power of the devil, the sense of the passage probably being, "But deliver us from the evil one" (R.V.). This may then be considered a prayer for security from those suggestions of, and solicitations to, sin that come through our mental processes and emotional experiences, whether they be temptations to doubt in some one or other of its manifold forms, or to the gratification of sinful desire—in short, the temptations that arise within and are caused by the devil. If this be so, then every time we offer this "daily" prayer we recognize the personality and power of the devil and seek divine succor against him.

We may summarize the contents of this

profound and comprehensive prayer as follows: The Fatherhood of God, standing at the beginning and involved to the end; the primacy and supremacy of the kingdom of God; the providential supply of the temporal needs of the children of God; the forgiveness of sins, bound up with the love that forgives our enemies; the providential overruling of the outward circumstances of life for securing and conserving the spiritual well-being and safety of God's child; and deliverance and security from the power of the evil spirit. No wonder it was called by one of the Fathers, *Breviarium totius evangelii*: A summary of the whole gospel.

The question has frequently been asked whether this prayer is intended to be a prayer for all men or only for members of the kingdom. The question is answered by the consideration that no man can pray the prayer in reality and sincerity who is not a member of the kingdom. Conversely, any one who can

pray this prayer in the spirit which it implies, as we have seen, and who does so pray it, is *ipso facto* a member of God's kingdom, whatever else he may or may not be.

The proper understanding and use of this prayer furnish a very sure test by which men may determine whether they are members of God's kingdom, or, which is the same thing, sons of God.

## XI.

### Jesus and the Old Testament.

#### I. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MORAL LAW.

IT is to be borne in mind that we are engaged in studying phases in the life and character of him who was the Son of man. We are never to lose sight of the fact that Jesus was the Son of man and—man. Whether he was also divine is a question which cannot be put aside, and which will come up for inquiry later. Meanwhile, we are not to lose sight of the facts recorded in our sources, such as that we find in Luke ii. 52. Jesus was born in human conditions. He was subject to human limitations. He advanced in all respects according to the law of a natural human development. If he had knowledge, it was because he acquired knowledge. If his wisdom increased, it was

because *he* increased in wisdom. There can be no doubt that he was instructed by his mother, who was a holy and devout woman, and who, as her song of thanksgiving indicates, was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. There can be no doubt that he learned from the observation of nature, and from contact with men. And it is certain he derived instruction from the religious services of the synagogue; for that there was a synagogue at Nazareth we are not left to conjecture, and that it *was his custom* to attend its services, we are explicitly told. (Luke iv. 16.) But these were not the only or the chief sources whence he derived his wisdom. It is clear from the four Gospel histories that he was thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures; and we know from a few examples of his use of them that they were to him a source of wisdom in the conduct of his life, and that they furnished to him the principles in accordance with which he was to govern

himself in certain grave emergencies, such as his experience of temptation in the wilderness. From this example of his use of the Scriptures we see how they were a means of supporting and developing his inner life of trust and obedience, and how they contributed to the formation of his life and character. These Scriptures, then, among other sources of wisdom, and more than any other sources of wisdom, were to Jesus as to other devout Israelites, only in a much more effective way and a much higher degree, a means of instruction and development. This was through the principles and truths taught in their law and prophets, and illustrated in so concrete and vivid a way in their histories. If then he, the Messiah, was not to be suddenly and mysteriously produced, and directly and immediately manifested as a god out of heaven, but was, as a man, to be developed in a natural human way, we can readily understand how it was that he grew up in such close identification with the earlier revela-

tion and in a sense dependent on it. If God had manifested the Messiah suddenly and apocalyptically from the skies, which might have been more proper, but which he did not do, then he might have brought the Messiah to his place and mission in the world entirely apart from and independent of any previous revelation; or, indeed, he might have dispensed with any previous revelation altogether. But inasmuch as the Messiah and Mediator was to be a man, a true normal man, that man must have a real human development, as well as the experience involved in a real human development. Now if this was so, then that development would naturally be, as we see it was, not apart from, but in close connection with and by means of, that revelation of himself which God had been slowly making for some hundreds of years. If, then, the Old Testament Scriptures were to Jesus, in his growth and development, a source of the knowledge of God and of spiritual wisdom, it follows,



as a matter of course, that he grew up recognizing in the Old Testament Scriptures a revelation of God, a fact which he continually asserts or implies.

Here, then, we are brought face to face with the relation between Jesus and the Old Testament record of the earlier revelation, and with the problem which that relation involves. And here perhaps may be found a partial answer to the question, Why was it necessary that the Revealer and Representative of God, the Messiah and Mediator between the absolute God and the race of men, should come as the descendant of a long line of Jewish ancestors, and in such close identification with a history and a system that are involved in so many and so various difficulties? Why could not the Revealer and Redeemer have been manifested absolutely, without involving and embarrassing himself and his system with all the difficulties that pertained to the Jewish system?

If anything illustrates and accentuates the

reality of Jesus' humanity, it is the fact that he did so come. If anything will explain the fact of his relation of organic connection with the long process of historico-religious development which took place through the Jews, it is the fact that he was, as he calls himself, a son of man, born in human conditions, under human limitations, and subject to the normal and necessary law of human development.

But there is another side to this subject. While Jesus did find the Old Testament Scriptures a source of wisdom and knowledge, and their contents a means of nourishing and developing his own inner life of faith and piety, and did, *ipso facto*, as well as expressly and repeatedly, recognize in them a revelation of God and of truth, yet he rose above them and went beyond them, and that in such a way as to demonstrate not only that he was not limited by them or bound down to them, but that he was conscious of being in himself an independent

and original source and fountain of spiritual and divine truth, and invested with a higher authority than those Scriptures themselves.

While Jesus recognized the divine revelation contained in the Old Testament, he recognized also the limitations and imperfections of that revelation. While he acknowledged the divine authority of the revelation contained in the Old Testament, he was conscious of having himself a deeper and truer revelation, and consequently assumed authority to amplify that earlier revelation, and even to correct and abrogate parts thereof which did not accord with the deeper knowledge of truth and of God which he possessed. This consciousness of possessing a knowledge of God which was true, full, and final, was one of the elements of his consciousness of uniqueness among men and of his Messiahship.

In order to make plain what has been said, it will be necessary to cite particular cases. In the Sermon on the Mount, he,

in several instances, sets himself in contrast with the law of the Mosaic system, with the emphasis on his own superior authority. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you."<sup>1</sup> He then proceeds in some instances to extend the application of Mosaic prohibitions from the outward act, of which alone they took cognizance, to the inward feeling, of which the outward act is the expression. Whereas the Mosaic law forbade the outward acts of murder and adultery, Jesus, with full consciousness of legislative authority, forbade the passions of hate and lust, making the one equivalent to murder and the other to adultery. In this instance he assumed the imperfection of the Mosaic legislation and supplemented it.

In another instance, he extended the Mosaic prohibition of false swearing and for-

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the personal pronoun *ἐγώ*, according to the well-known usage of the Greek, carries with it distinct and special emphasis.

bids swearing altogether. (Matt. v. 33, 34.) But he goes further than this and *sets aside* portions of the Mosaic institute. For example, he sets aside the law of retaliation and imposes instead his own law of nonresisting endurance of injuries, even the most exasperating. (Matt. v. 38.) He repeals the Mosaic ordinance providing for divorce and promulgates his own law entirely prohibiting divorce except for one cause.

Quoting the Mosaic law of love to one's neighbor and the negation of love in the case of foreigners which the spirit of the Israelitish law and the hostile relation of Israel to other nations involved,<sup>1</sup> and which the rabbis had formulated into a distinct statutory prescription, he flatly contradicts the latter and then supplements the former by his authoritative command to love one's enemies. (Matt. v. 43.)

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Toy, Quotations in the New Testament, p. 29.

In these examples, it is the imperfect and erroneous idea of righteousness as presented in the Old Testament law that Jesus directly and chiefly criticises and corrects. Incidentally, however, in the very same discourse, as well as elsewhere, he implicitly criticises and corrects the idea of the kingdom of God as presented in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. He shows by his delineation of the ethical and spiritual characteristics of the kingdom that it is purely and wholly ethical and spiritual.

Again in speaking, throughout this discourse, of God in the way he conceived him, namely, as Father, he made a great advance on the conception of God as presented, for the most part, in the Old Testament. And we do not know how many and what other particular parts of the Old Testament he would have corrected as being inadequate, imperfect, or erroneous, if occasion had arisen. It is tolerably certain that

he would have corrected or rejected or abrogated any part that is contrary to the spirit of universal, sympathetic, helpful, forgiving love as he expounds and enjoins it in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere. We are not to conclude that the particular instances wherein he did correct or reject or abrogate are all that he would have corrected, if occasion had arisen. The cases we have on record are only examples of the general principle. Whenever we find anything in the Old Testament which contradicts the law of love as taught by Jesus and illustrated in his life, it need make no difficulty, no matter how we may undertake to account for its being there, or whether we undertake to account for it at all. On this point Jesus has given us an instructive example in saying that the Old Testament statute providing for divorce,<sup>1</sup> which

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<sup>1</sup>The Mosaic statute on the subject of divorce should be read in full. It is as follows: "When a man taketh a wife and marrieth her, then it shall be if she find no

he abrogated, was put in as a temporary provision on account of the hardness of their hearts, the meaning of which seems to be that the people were not able at that time to receive anything higher. Perhaps the same

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favor in his eyes because he findeth some unseemly thing in her, he shall write her a bill of divorcement and send her out of his house. And she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband *hate* her, he may give her a bill of divorcement and send her out of his house." (Deut. xxiv. 1-3.) The "unseemly thing" was not conjugal infidelity or unchastity, since for this the penalty was death (Deut. xxii. 22). Moreover, the same expression in Hebrew is used in Deut. xxiii. 14 for what is "unbecoming," as the context shows. The school of Hillel understood the "unseemly thing" to include anything that displeased the husband, *e. g.*, if she burned his food, or if he saw a woman who pleased him better. This view is confirmed by what Josephus says (Ant., IV. viii. 23): "He that desires to be divorced from his wife *for any cause whatsoever*, let him in writing give assurance that he will never use her as his wife any more." See also Driver, Commentary on Deuteronomy, *in loc.* The superiority of the teaching of Jesus to this legislation is immeasurable.



may be said as to the so-called imprecatory Psalms and all other contents of a similar character.

## II. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CEREMONIAL LAW.

Such was Jesus' attitude toward the moral law. His attitude toward the ceremonial parts of the Mosaic law will require separate treatment. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 17-19.)

The law is here taken by many scholars

in its widest extent, including its moral, civil, and ceremonial precepts. If this be so, the meaning seems to be that "the laws of Moses, without exception or distinction, are to be observed while the world stands." We cannot believe he taught any such thing. If the law be here understood of the moral law, no such consequence follows. But can "the law" be here taken in this sense? Let us see.

In the first place, it is undeniably true that Jesus did not come to destroy any part, great or small, of the moral law. As a matter of fact he did not in any instance, either explicitly or by implication, in any degree, relax the requirement or limit the perpetuity of any moral precept. The same cannot be said of the ceremonial precepts.

In the second place, in his habitual use of the phrase "the law," it is evident he means the moral statutes. In this same discourse, for example, he says with great force, "Whatsoever, therefore, ye would that men

should do unto you, even so do ye unto them; for *this is the law and the prophets.*” (Matt. vii. 12.) When the rich young ruler asked him what commandments he meant when he bade him keep them as a condition of eternal life, he specifies moral precepts alone. When the lawyer asked him what was the great commandment, he answers, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” etc., “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” *Then he adds* (note it), “On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.” (Matt. xxii. 34-40.)

As Wendt says, in another connection, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself is certainly no summary of the vast number of those ritual and ceremonial ordinances of the Old Testament law which the Pharisees set in the first rank.”<sup>1</sup> Mark, in his report of this case, or of a similar one, says that

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching of Jesus, i. 363.

this scribe or lawyer replied to Jesus' summary of the law by saying, Master, thou hast well said; and to love God with all the heart . . . and one's neighbor as oneself is *much more* than *all* whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Jesus commended his insight and *the contrast which he drew* between the moral and the ceremonial parts of the law, by saying, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

In the third place, all the instances which he proceeds to cite as illustrations of his having come not to destroy but to fulfill, are taken from the moral law, and not one from the ceremonial. It is probable that it was with the criticisms of the law, the moral law, which immediately follow, in mind, that he uttered the precaution, "Think not that I came to destroy, but to fulfill." "Certainly his procedure did *appear* to the Pharisees as an arbitrary, partial destruction of the law."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 28 ff. <sup>2</sup> Wendt, ii. 26.

In the fourth place, Jesus seldom speaks of the ceremonial prescriptions as the law, nor does he use the word law when he does speak of them. When he speaks of these at all, it is in other language and apparently always in a disparaging tone, examples of which will fall to be considered further on. There is one exception to what has just been said. There is one passage in which Jesus speaks of circumcision in connection with "the law" and as prescribed in the law. The passage is as follows: "For this cause Moses gave you circumcision, . . . and on the Sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the Sabbath that the law of Moses may not be broken, are ye angry with me because I made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath?" (John vii. 22, 23.) Here he does speak of a ceremonial prescription as a part of the law. But one thing is to be noted: He speaks of the law as "the law of Moses," intimating that the zeal of the Jews was not

for the absolute right but for that system composed, in large part, of external ceremonial prescriptions which they superstitiously revered as "the law of Moses." Again, he seems implicitly to contrast this law of Moses, consisting in large part of external and ceremonial ordinances, with a higher law (the higher spirit of Old Testament law) of mercy. Why are ye angry with me because, in obedience to a higher law, I made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath? In other words, there is a tone of disparagement in his language, if not for "the law of Moses," composed in large part of such small external matters, yet certainly for the miserable narrowness and shallowness and hardness of the Jews who would attribute greater importance to an external rite than to a work of love and mercy.

It is notable that, so far as the records go, this is the only place where Christ mentions circumcision, and here he does not evince a very high esteem for it. He could

hardly have intended that it and similar rites should be perpetuated.

In the fifth place, it is not probable that he here used the word law as inclusive of its civil and ceremonial enactments, because, while he says he that breaks one of the least of these commandments shall be called least in the kingdom of God, he himself did abrogate the ceremonial parts of the law. In fact, he virtually abrogates in one saying the whole mass of Levitical prescriptions as to the distinction between clean and unclean meats, prefacing his words with solemn emphasis, indicative of the gravity of his meaning, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing from without the man which going into him can defile him, but the things that proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. For from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, murders, adulteries, covetings, deceit, lasciviousness, pride, foolishness." (Mark vii. 14-22.) The wri-

ter (Mark) adds by way of interpretation, in verse 19, "This he said making all meats clean."

Again, when he says to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh when neither in this mountain *nor in Jerusalem* shall ye worship the Father; the hour cometh and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth," he virtually annuls the prescription of all temple worship and all ritualistic service, and substitutes instead the spiritual worship of God wherever on the face of the round earth spiritual seekers after God and spiritual worshipers of God may be found.

And yet again, in condemning the current doctrine and practice of Sabbath observance, while he does not abrogate the Sabbath, he not only takes a much more liberal view of it than the rabbis and Pharisees held, but also a much more liberal view than the Mosaic law on the subject would warrant or allow. He opposes the



strictness of the specific Mosaic ordinances concerning the observance of the Sabbath. However, it is certain he did not do away the law of the Sabbath or the obligation of Sabbath observance. When he said "the Sabbath was made for man," he only meant to put it in its proper place and to say that the Sabbath was not *imposed* upon man as a yoke and a burden, but that it was *bestowed* on him as a boon and a blessing.<sup>1</sup>

Now if Jesus elsewhere and habitually uses the word law in its moral sense, if, with one single exception, he uses it of the moral precepts *only*, and if, as matter of fact, he does in several instances, "destroy," *i. e.*, abrogate, the ceremonial law, it seems reasonable to understand that also in the passage in hand he has in mind the moral law with no thought of the great mass of ceremonial prescriptions which make up so large a part of the Mosaic legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Professor Bruce in *The Training of the Twelve*.

The only difficulty in this view is that it seems to make Jesus say that one who breaks one of these moral commandments may still have a place in the kingdom of heaven, since he says he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Many interpreters have taken this to be a euphemistic way of saying he shall be excluded from the kingdom. Or it may mean that the member thus offending may retain a place (though the least place) in the kingdom because "his antinomianism is not a *principle*, is not directed against the law as such, but only against individual precepts of the law which are in themselves small." Or it may have this general meaning: That "greatness in the kingdom of God" turns upon the degree of perfection with which a man himself fulfills the least commandment of the law (as Jesus was on the point of interpreting and expounding it) and teaches others to do so.

But however it is to be explained, and even if it cannot be satisfactorily explained at all, it is a much less difficulty than would be involved in understanding Jesus to teach that “all parts and particulars of the law of Moses without exception or distinction are to be observed while the world endures.” In fact, it is almost impossible to conceive of Jesus saying this, in view of all that we know he did say and mean and do. It is perfectly clear that he did not give his sanction to the perpetuity of the ceremonial precepts of the Mosaic law. On the other hand, he assumed authority to cancel them, and did cancel them, while in dealing with the moral law he abrogated what was contrary to the spirit of love, he amended what was defective, he amplified what was partial; but he did not *destroy* any part of the moral law. For if he seems to do so in the verses following our passage, it is only seems. He did what he said he came to do—he fulfilled, he filled

up, he filled out, what was quantitatively incomplete and qualitatively imperfect.

To show his hearers that the law in the form in which it was given in the Old Testament *was* incomplete and imperfect was the first step in the process of completing and perfecting it, of fulfilling it.

After all his labored discussion of this difficult saying of Jesus, Wendt's view is substantially the same. He says: "In consciousness and in aim Jesus retained the idea of the old and did not produce what was absolutely new; but he sought to bring the imperfect expression of that idea to perfection by retaining part of the traditional form of this expression as valid and by rejecting another part as without worth, whilst still another part was changed, or replaced by what was quite new according as this was required by the uniform idea of the whole."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Teaching of Jesus, ii. 26.

“Jesus’ assurance that the Old Testament contained a true revelation of God was not founded on the idea that all the words of the Old Testament were of equal value and must be regarded as having the same absolute authority. He possessed the spiritual freedom to discern the imperfection of the Old Testament Scripture and to set his own doctrine in a position of superiority to that of the Old Testament. He possessed also the devout historical sense, in spite of the necessary divergence of his doctrine from that of the Old Testament, to understand the connection between the two and to appreciate and uphold what was permanently true in the Old Testament. He combined the recognition of the revelation-significance of the Old Testament with inward freedom in regard to the letter of the Old Testament and with the consciousness of possessing a more perfect revelation himself.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching of Jesus, ii. 33, 34.

“From such parts of the Old Testament as harmonized with the revelation which he had personally experienced, and which afforded a valuable confirmation of that revelation, he had the certainty that the law and the prophets were a true revelation of God, and that their authority was not to be simply abrogated. On the other hand, so far as he, nevertheless, found in the law and the prophets contents which did *not* agree with the revelation of which he had inward certainty, he was led to conclude that the true revelation of God did not exist in perfect form in the law and the prophets, and that it was his peculiar task to set forth in perfect form the revelation of the divine will. In this sense he could say that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill.”<sup>1</sup>

If any one, holding a mechanical view of the absolute and equal inspiration of all

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching of Jesus, ii. 15.

parts of the Old Testament, should feel offended at this view of the imperfection of its contents, the question may be asked, If the revelation contained in the Old Testament was not imperfect and incomplete, where was the necessity or utility of Christ's coming at all, and what did he bring or add that we did not have in the Old Testament already?

It should be said that there is still another view of the difficult passage, Matt. v. 17-19. Understanding that Jesus has in mind the Mosaic law as a whole, including the ceremonial, some take the word "fulfill" as meaning that he would supply the reality that should answer to the symbolical intent and significance of all the parts and particulars of this ceremonial system. That is, he would reveal the reality of which the temple was the type, of which the holy of holies was the type, of which the Levitical sacrifices were a type, of which the Levitical purifications were a type, etc.

But in the first place, it is unfortunate for this view that Jesus does not adopt this method of adjusting and harmonizing the old and the new. The apostle Paul does, in some particulars, as when he declares what he conceived to be the spiritual significance of the rite of circumcision. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has an elaborate scheme worked out on the idea of showing what realities the types of the old system corresponded to. But Christ, so far as I can recall, never adopts this method of Old Testament exegesis, and never tries in this way to explain the ceremonial features of the old system or to unify the old and the new. He never allegorizes or spiritualizes the external ceremonial rites of the Old Testament. If this had been his view, one would think he would in a few instances have illustrated this method, and yet he has not left on record a single example of it. He seems always busied with things of greater weight and import than taking care



of the endless ceremonial matters of the Levitical system. He referred to these only to abrogate them.

And in the second place, amid the multitude of ceremonial prescriptions found in the Old Testament there are many for which no corresponding spiritual counterpart can be found. If so, then there were some that could not be "fulfilled" in this sense.

But did not Jesus himself observe all the ceremonial rites and perform all the ceremonial acts prescribed in the Old Testament? We cannot answer this question positively, for we do not know. But the indications are that he did not. It is tolerably certain that he did not observe the Levitical distinction of clean and unclean meats. And it is pretty clear that he did not observe the letter of the Mosaic requirements concerning even so important and sacred an institution as the Sabbath. Compare Ex. xxxi. 14, 15; Ex. xxxv. 2, 3; Num. xv. 32-36.

On the other hand, all that we know for certain is that he generally, though probably not always, attended the Passover, and sometimes some of the other yearly feasts at Jerusalem. But he may have done this partly because there was something really suggestive and instructive in the ceremonies and exercises of those great occasions, and partly because at these great gatherings he came in contact with and had opportunity to teach a greater number of people than he could otherwise have reached.

Moreover, even if it *could* be shown that he personally observed many or all of the details of the Mosaic law, which cannot be done, still we can readily see how it might be best for him as a Jew to do so. To abandon all this suddenly and summarily might be too abrupt and radical, so revolutionary as to defeat his mission to the Jewish nation.

What has now been said applies more es-

pecially to the law. But Jesus included the prophets also in his remarkable saying, "I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them." The word "fulfill" means the same when applied to the prophetical writings that we have found it to mean in its application to the law. Jesus did not come to set aside what the prophets had said, to deny the revelation imparted to them by God, or to diminish their authority. But the revelation imparted to the prophets and through the prophets was also imperfect and incomplete. Why it was so, why God did not give to them a complete and perfect revelation such as Christ gave, it would be idle to inquire. We have only to compare the revelation given through the prophets with that given by Christ, to see the fact.

The prophets knew, but they knew in part; they prophesied, but they prophesied in part. They saw, but they saw through a glass darkly. Christ saw face to face.

He knew even as also he was known.<sup>1</sup> It was his mission to supply what in them was lacking, to correct what was erroneous, to complete what was imperfect.

Take some examples: The doctrine of immortality, while it is contained in the Old Testament, is not brought out with frequency or fullness. At any rate, it does not seem to have been a clear conception with the sages and seers of the older dispensation. They did not seem to see it clearly and grasp it firmly. With Jesus it is as clear as the light and as sure as God. It was he "who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

We have already seen that in the view and representation of the kingdom of God by the prophets, while it is a kingdom of righteousness, it is also a kingdom of this world with a present theocratic king ruling in power and reducing all the kingdoms of the

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Matt. xi. 27.

world to his sway. With Jesus the kingdom of God is a purely spiritual-ethical conception, excluding all elements of a temporal-worldly nature.

As to the idea of God, the Old Testament seers and saints had a conception of him incomparably purer, higher, and nobler than is to be found anywhere else in history or literature.<sup>1</sup> Individually many of them were thoroughly interfused with the idea of God's personality and with a sense of his presence and holiness. And yet, in comparison with the conception which Jesus has given us of God, their conception was imperfect.

This very question as to the relation of the new to the old was, in one form or another,

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<sup>1</sup> It is ignorance or prejudice or perverseness that speaks of the Old Testament as being on a level with the so-called sacred books of other peoples. It stands alone. They are not to be mentioned on the same day with it. They express aspirations after God; the Old Testament is a revelation of God. They may be seekers of light; the Old Testament is a giver of light.

*the* problem of the apostolic age: How could Christ and Christianity supersede the Old Testament system as being imperfect and transitory, if it contained a real revelation from God? Or, how could the Old Testament contain a true revelation from God and of God, if it could be and was to be superseded as imperfect or transitory by Christ and Christianity? Paul faced the problem, and we see how vigorously he wrestled with it, especially in parts of the Epistle to the Romans, as chapters iv., vii., ix., x., xi. Indeed, it is so prominent in the Epistle that some great scholars think this problem to be the chief topic and its solution the chief purpose of the Epistle. (So Dr. Baur.) It is treated by Paul in Galatians also, and is touched upon in others of his epistles. If this problem is not *the* theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as some think it is,<sup>1</sup> it *is* the theme of a

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<sup>1</sup>Though others, as Harnack and McGiffert (Apostolic Age, p. 471), think it is not.

very large section of the Epistle, in the course of which the author significantly and strikingly says, quite in accordance with what we believe to be Christ's view, "If that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second."<sup>1</sup> In the same chapter he says, "The mention of a *new* covenant implies that the first covenant is *old*. But that which is growing old and becoming aged is nigh unto vanishing away."<sup>2</sup>

John does not labor at the problem or stop to discuss it. He summarily disposes of it in one pregnant sentence: "The law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (i. 17).

One fact is quite noteworthy. The New Testament biographies of Jesus record those sayings of his in which he recognizes the divine inspiration of the writers of the Old Testament, and the true revelation of God

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. viii. 7. <sup>2</sup> Heb. viii. 13.

contained in the Old Testament, and those sayings also in which he criticises, corrects, amends, or abrogates the contents of those Scriptures, thus implying the imperfection of that revelation; but their authors make no attempt to harmonize these views of Jesus. They do not seem to feel that they need to be harmonized. They simply record the facts. And what a proof have we here of their veracity!

Another reflection: One would think that with the example which Jesus gave them of freedom in dealing with the Old Testament, the apostles would have gone on further in the same direction. But no. Either they did not comprehend this free handling of the Old Testament by Jesus, or possibly they did not even *discover* it. For they are incomparably more bound down to the Old Testament than Jesus is. Indeed, after eighteen hundred years Christians are only beginning to discover the freedom of Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament and his judgment



of it as imperfect, incomplete, and, in parts, contrary to the truth of which he had clear revelation and absolute certainty. We have to go to Jesus to learn the right estimate of the Old Testament, and we are just finding this out. These facts stand as a striking instance of Christ's superiority to his contemporaries and to eighteen centuries of their successors. Jesus is still ahead of the world. It is a reversal of the true order to say, "Back to Christ." Our cry should rather be, "Forward to Christ."

NOTE.—The treatment of Jesus' relation to the Old Testament in this chapter is incomplete. The Study on Jesus' Quotations from the Old Testament was excluded by the prescribed limits of this little work.

## XII.

### The Transfiguration.

THE synoptic Gospels agree in placing the transfiguration a few days after the journey to Cæsarea Philippi and the occurrences which there took place. The purpose of Jesus in withdrawing into those remote regions was doubtless that he might prepare himself and the disciples for the crisis which he saw was fast approaching in his life. As he withdrew for retirement and meditation into the desert at the opening of his ministry, and, as we have seen, there became more fully acquainted with what it was to mean and received preparation for it; so now, when he saw that the turning point in his ministry was reached, and he was to enter upon its last stage and turn his face toward the sorrowful experiences of the close, he withdrew  
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into a remote and unfrequented region for meditation and prayer, and for the instruction of the disciples in those approaching events about which they did not know and for which they needed preparation. He seems to have been unwontedly abstracted, not to say depressed, and, though he was pre-eminently a man of prayer, he gave himself to prayer at this time more constantly and earnestly than was common even for him. We learn from the third Gospel that he was praying alone with his disciples<sup>1</sup> there in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi just before he asked them the questions that would elicit their impression and estimate of the Son of man. And when he found they were well grounded in a conviction that satisfied his consciousness as to his person, then he sorrowfully revealed to them what had doubtless taken possession of his own

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<sup>1</sup>Luke ix. 18: "It came to pass as he was praying alone, his disciples were with him."

mind, the inevitable death that awaited him after only a little while. After this interview, he seems to have withdrawn still further into the solemn solitudes of the neighborhood of Mount Hermon.

It is not improbable that he spent the eight days intervening between the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi and the transfiguration in prayer. For we are informed that at the beginning he was engaged in prayer; and at the close, seeking yet deeper retirement and privacy, he took his three most intimate friends among the Twelve and withdrew yet further into some remote part of the wild mountain heights, in order to pray.<sup>1</sup> The scene reminds one of the later time when, withdrawing to a lonely garden with the Twelve, he took the three trusted ones apart again that in his loneliness he might not be utterly alone, and prayed the prayer of Gethsemane. The struggle of Gethsemane was already in his soul when with the

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<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 28.

three he ascended the heights of Hermon to find a deep retreat for prolonged prayer. It was doubtless a foretaste of Gethsemane and his prayer was for strength to meet the coming bitterness. The transfiguration was the answer. "As he *was praying*, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun."<sup>1</sup>

It is held by some<sup>2</sup> that the transfiguration was primarily for the benefit of the disciples, and that it was a vision, a sort of half-waking dream, and not an objective reality. We believe it was neither.

We have seen in our study of the baptism of Jesus that when he dedicated himself to the Messianic mission in submitting himself to baptism, the Father, at that solemn crisis, gave him an objective revelation, confirming his consciousness of Messiah-

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<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 29; Mark ix. 2; Matt. xvii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Weiss, iii. 101; Gilbert, 276, 277.

ship and accepting and approving his act of voluntary self-dedication to the Messianic vocation. If he needed this testimony from the Father at the opening of his ministry, we can see no reason why like testimony may not have been needed by him at the turning point in his ministry. And if the testimony of the Father at the baptism was given to confirm his consciousness of Messiahship, as we have seen, it would be in accord with that to interpret the transfiguration as meant to confirm as well as approve his deliberate choice of death in fulfillment of his Messianic work. For it was immediately after his full, deliberate, and decisive self-dedication to death that the transfiguration occurred; and his death was the subject of converse between him and the heavenly visitants.

Moreover, if the conversation about his death was intended for the benefit of the disciples, as, on the theory we are opposing, it must have been, then it must have

failed of its purpose. For according to the account of Luke they were heavy with sleep, while according to Mark they were so dazed with the sights they saw that Peter, not knowing what to say, talked as one whose mind wandered. Again, if it was intended for the benefit of the disciples, this must mean that it was to prepare them for the ordeal to which they were to be subjected when their Master and Lord was delivered into the hands of his enemies and put to death as a malefactor. But it had no such effect. They were *not* prepared for that event. They were unnerved and confounded by it; and they fled away in terror. Nor were they restored to a state of confidence and courage till after the resurrection; for it was the resurrection, and not the recollection of the transfiguration, which changed them from cowards to conquerors. The transfiguration, then, was for Jesus himself, for Jesus the Son of man, who under all the infirmities, limitations,

and disabilities of human nature was bearing a burden never hitherto borne, and treading a path never hitherto trodden by any human being. In it he was solitary. He had no companionship and no sympathy; for there was not one on earth who understood him. When he looked out upon the dark and lonely way of duty and deliberately chose to walk in it, it is no great wonder that in his human weakness and dependence he prayed long and intensely for the recognition and sympathy of his Father in heaven and for some token of encouragement. And it is hardly a greater wonder that his Father should answer, and answer in the transcendent apocalypse of the transfiguration.

It was not then a subjective vision, a half-waking dream of the sleepy disciples. It was more probably an objective reality, given to Jesus for his own sake and incidentally witnessed by the disciples who were with him. If it had been a mere vision or



sort of trance, the writer could have said so. And he probably would have said so. For the same writer does speak of such a trance and such a vision in his other book, the Acts of the Apostles, where he says, "Peter fell into a trance, and he beheld the heaven opened and a sort of vessel descending, as it were, a great sheet,"<sup>1</sup> etc. He also speaks of visions of Paul, and he makes it plain that they were visions, *i. e.*, he says they were visions. He says,<sup>2</sup> "A vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Another instance: "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision,"<sup>3</sup> etc.

Perhaps something similar, in kind, to the transfiguration is to be found in the case of Stephen, who, in doing what he probably knew would cause his death, was following in the steps of his Master: "And all that sat in the council, fastening

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<sup>1</sup>Acts x. 10, 11. <sup>2</sup>Acts xvi. 9. <sup>3</sup>Acts xviii. 9.

their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”<sup>1</sup> This could hardly have been a subjective vision of the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 15.

### XIII.

#### The Self-Consciousness of Jesus.

HUMAN beings are so constituted by nature that they have manifold impulses and passions, the repression of which involves struggle and pain, while their indulgence gives enjoyment. There is consequently a strong tendency to gratify the desires and passions, a tendency which human nature, as a rule, is too feeble to resist. With the development of the sense of individuality there arises also an element of perverseness, an impatience of restraint, whether from within or without, the assertion of the right to have one's own way. Thus the dormant sin-principle is developed; it proves too much for conscience and will, and sin is the inevitable and universal result. Constant self-denial is necessary to refuse to follow the natural impulses that promise

pleasure, and to choose only the ways that are right. This self-denial is the practical moral problem and task of life, and in it all men have failed: unless Jesus was an exception.

Have we reason for believing that Jesus was an exception? So far as his life is covered by the records, there is no fault to be found in him. If we may quote once more the words of Dr. Keim, "It was a whole, a full, a blameless life, no piecework, no mixture of the lofty and the base. It is the completion of man as man, the ideal of God in his creation, realized."<sup>1</sup> But can it be historically established that his life, from beginning to end, was without sin? This can hardly be done by an examination of his actions and words as recorded by the evangelists, for they do not cover every act and detail of his whole life, much of which, in the nature of the case, had to be omitted.

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<sup>1</sup>Jesus of Nazareth, ii. 63.

It is a fact, however, that the apostles ascribe to him perfect freedom from sin: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."<sup>1</sup> "Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin on our behalf."<sup>2</sup> "Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."<sup>3</sup> And it should be remembered that this was on the part of men who held the universal sinfulness of humanity and its need of redemption, and is therefore certainly to be taken in its strictest sense. While this testimony of the apostles could not of itself establish proof of the sinlessness of Jesus, yet, considering the character of the men and their knowledge of Jesus, as well as their knowledge of human nature, it has great weight in connection with other facts to be adduced.

In answer to his question, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" his adversaries were silent.<sup>4</sup> From this silence we can at least in-

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 22; iii. 18. <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. iv. 15. <sup>4</sup> John viii. 46.

fer that his life, as far as it was known, was free from reproach. But Jesus makes use of this admitted external blamelessness of his life to deduce from it a sinlessness that would insure his truthfulness. '(See the context.) "If you cannot convict me of any sin, why can you not believe what I say?" If, when Jesus said this, he had at the same time been conscious of any sin, then he, who so often accused the model men of his day of hypocrisy, would certainly have been guilty of hypocrisy himself; and, as Weiss strongly says, he would have been more wicked than the hypocrites whom he exposed and denounced. Again, Jesus said that he did always those things that pleased God.<sup>1</sup> He not only asserted this as a fact, which is one thing; he also gave it as the reason why God was always with him,<sup>2</sup> which is another thing. He had very con-

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<sup>1</sup>John viii. 29: "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." <sup>2</sup>See context.

fused notions of moral rectitude, and was sadly self-deceived, if he gave what he knew to be a lie as the reason why God was always with him. In another place he declares that he has finished the work which his Father had given him to do.<sup>1</sup>

These passages are from the fourth Gospel, but in the synoptics there are evidences which are all the stronger because they are indirect, for this shows that they could not have been invented from dogmatic motives. He there teaches that all men are sinful by nature; that all men are to be changed and to acquire a disposition which by nature they have not; he demands repentance from all men; he declares of all believers that an infinite debt has been forgiven them; and he teaches them to pray daily for the forgiveness of their offenses. And yet there never appears in himself the slightest trace of any feeling of penitence or of regret for what he has said or done. No prayer for forgive-

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<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 4.

ness ever crosses his lips. He never gives expression to the consciousness of enjoying for the first time peace with God or of coming into harmony with God. He knows nothing else but to be the Son of his heavenly Father, and is always conscious of his Father's love and approval, while all others must first *become* sons, and even then they must pray for the forgiveness of sins. He sets himself over against the whole sinful race of men as their Redeemer, and ultimately as their Judge. "These are facts," says Weiss, "which no criticism can shake. They speak for themselves. 'The dilemma,' he goes on to say, "is one from which there is no escape: He who has removed from the eyes of all the blindness of self-deception and of self-righteousness, who has taught us all to seek forgiveness where it is to be found, he was either the chief of sinners, for self-righteous pride is the root and climax of sin, or he was the only sinless one, upon whose life the peace of God rest-



ed. Not because he knew not the temptation and the conflict, without which no man can reach the summit of moral perfection, but because he approved himself in every temptation and gained the victory in every conflict. Thus he, who *was* all through his life sinless, *became* the absolutely good, the image of his Father in heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

While Jesus was the Son of man, and man, the single fact of his sinlessness sets him apart from all other men and puts him in a class by himself.

But in other respects as well Jesus stands apart from other men. He expressed the consciousness of possessing a knowledge of God that was unique. The knowledge was peculiar to himself, and his possession of it was exclusive. The most striking utterance of this consciousness to be found in the synoptics, and perhaps in the four Gospels,

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<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Life of Christ*, i. 353, 354.

is that saying of singular depth and beauty preserved for us in Matthew and Luke.<sup>1</sup> The setting is different as given by the two, and in either case it is difficult.<sup>2</sup> That of Luke seems to be the more natural and probable. According to him it is included in a joyous utterance of thanksgiving to his Father for the success which had attended the mission of the company of disciples whom he had sent out to supplement the labors of the Twelve, and for his goodness in revealing the knowledge of himself to such as are infants in simplicity and lowliness of spirit. The sense of the passage seems to be something like this: I thank thee, Father, Sovereign Disposer of all things in heaven and earth, that thou didst not make choice of the wise men of this world in order to reveal to them and deposit with them the knowledge of thyself; but that thou hast chosen

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 25-27; Luke x. 21, 22. It is called by Keim "the pearl of the sayings of Jesus."

<sup>2</sup> Keim rejects both settings.

such as have the simplicity and receptivity and lowliness of little children. And because my simplicity and lowliness and receptivity are complete and perfect, and I am one with the Father, the Father has committed unto me and deposited in me perfect knowledge of all these things, so that no one knows me, no one understands my inner life of fellowship with the Father, my perfect lowliness of spirit, my intuitive and complete knowledge of all things, except the Father himself. And no one has true and perfect knowledge of the Father except the Son, because no one has perfect lowliness and guilelessness and receptivity of spirit except the Son. Nor can any one get a knowledge of the Father till the Son shows him how. So, then, come unto me and learn of me, and I will teach you how. I am meek and lowly in heart. Do you become meek and lowly in heart, as I am, and you shall have revelation of the Father and find rest.

Parallel in meaning to this is the saying of

Jesus in John vii. 16, 17: "My teaching, at which you marvel, is not mine, but his that sent me. And if any man is willing to learn in the same way, willing to surrender his will to the will of God and to be at one with him, he shall come to know the teaching, and see that it is of God."

In our passage he did not give expression to his consciousness of a unique knowledge of God for the sake of didactically imparting that fact, but, incidentally, in the midst of his thanksgiving to the Father for making known himself and his truth to those of infant-like spirit and disposition, such as his disciples, then returning from their successful mission,<sup>1</sup> at least in some degree were. And in thinking of himself as the illustration,<sup>2</sup> *par excellence*, of this, he naturally passes on to an expression of the conscious-

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<sup>1</sup> If this be the proper setting.

<sup>2</sup> That this is the probable course of his thought is indicated by his description of himself as meek and lowly in heart, given in Matthew's report.

ness which he had of a knowledge of God which was perfect and which was peculiar to himself. The thanksgiving thus passes naturally over into this utterance of his consciousness, and this as naturally into a loving invitation to all who, under the discipline of life, were able and willing to become like-minded, to come to him and learn how.

This may or may not be a correct view of the course of his thought. In any case, the fact remains that the man Jesus in this saying, preserved for us by the synoptics, in the calmest and most natural manner, expresses the consciousness, on the one hand, of being such a person that none but the omniscient God comprehended him, and on the other, that no one but himself had a true and adequate knowledge of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> But we may reverently ask, Is this interpretation of his consciousness by Jesus sustained by the facts? Did he actually reveal in his teachings and life a knowledge of God that was absolutely unique? This consciousness of his is of such a nature that we can

It is to be noted that this is much stronger than if he had merely said that he himself had a true and adequate knowledge of God. His language means that he knew what knowledge of God all others had (or did not have), and he knew that none of them knew God. This extraordinary claim must have been based on a yet deeper conscious-

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subject it to actual test and verification. The matchless things he said remain on record. He gave to the world a new conception of God, and by means of it he set in motion a moral revolution and a Godward movement among men which has been going on for these two thousand years, and is now more potent and more widespread than ever before. By common consent, both of those who believe him divine and those who do not, he spake and taught concerning God as never man spake or taught, before or since. One of the latter class has said of him: "He poured out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God. . . . Eighteen centuries have passed since the sun of humanity rose so high in Jesus. What man or sect has mastered his thought or comprehended his method and applied it to life?" (Theodore Parker, in Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 326.)

ness of bearing a relation to God which was exclusive, which in the nature of the case no other *could* bear. Otherwise, how could he know the universal negative which he declares? In other words, how could he know enough about all other men that had lived, were living, or should ever live, to be able to say of them that no one of them knew God?

The knowledge of God which Jesus was conscious of having was not imparted to him by the Holy Spirit; for the Holy Spirit did not come upon him until his baptism. He had it from childhood. It was a conscious element of his own nature, of his own personality, and was due no doubt to the fact of his relation of essential, organic union with God.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, he has, in many in-

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<sup>1</sup>It could hardly be by virtue of omniscience; for this he never claims; on the contrary, he apparently disclaims it. Mark xiii. 32. See also Study IV. on his Equipment.

stances and various ways, given expression to the consciousness of a relation of unique intimacy with God. No doubt it was in this that his perfect knowledge of God was grounded, and his knowledge of the ignorance of all other men as well. For though this knowledge was probably based on the perfect simplicity and receptivity of his nature, as we have seen, through which, as through a transparent medium, the things of God shone into his soul, it was probably due to his deep and vital relation to God that his simplicity and receptivity were ideal and perfect. Again and again he speaks of himself as enjoying an intimacy of relation to God which no other member of the human race has ever had or dreamed of having. This, as well as his unique knowledge of God, is clearly implied in the remarkable passage from the synoptics which has just been the subject of our study.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 25-27; Luke x. 21, 22.



There are other sayings of Jesus in which his consciousness of a unique relation to God is implied rather than expressly declared. This incidental implication of it seems all the stronger because of its incidental character. It indicates that this relation of unique intimacy with God was an organic, inseparable element of his consciousness which he unconsciously expressed even when speaking of other topics.

At the conclusion of his answer to the charge of being in league with the chief of devils, he says, "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."<sup>1</sup> In associating himself in this manner with the Holy Spirit, he, as it were, unconsciously reveals his consciousness of a

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 32; Luke xii. 10.

unique sanctity and majesty of person. Again, there must have been some singular element in his consciousness which led him to feel that it was necessary to give the information that sins committed against himself were pardonable. If he was not profoundly, organically conscious of a nature, rank, and sanctity above that of men in general, why was it not true as a matter of course that sins against him might be forgiven, as sins against other men? Who is this Son of man? What is this Son of man that he should thus single himself out from the race of men and inform us that sins committed against himself were not unpardonable? Why should he thus singularly couple himself with the Holy Spirit of God, and that in a saying the subject of which was the divine majesty and inviolable sanctity of the Holy Spirit? In doing so he plainly, though incidentally, reveals a consciousness that differentiates him from all other men. It should be borne in mind that this say-

ing is recorded not in the Gospel of John,<sup>1</sup> but in two of the synoptic Gospels.

That is a remarkable saying of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Mark<sup>2</sup> concerning the time of the final consummation. "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Here the upward gradation in the enumeration of man first, then the angels, then the Son, and lastly the Father, gives to the Son a rank superior to men, superior to angels, and second only to the

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<sup>1</sup>There is a saying in the fourth Gospel which is suggested by this one, and may be cited here. In John xiv. 28, he tells his disciples that if they had loved him they would have rejoiced that he was going to the Father; "because," he adds, "the Father is greater than I." Surely he must have had the consciousness of a peculiar personal relation to God who felt that there was any reason for declaring that God was greater than himself. Imagine any man, the best and wisest of men, saying, "God is greater than I." What would be thought of a man who should publicly declare, "God is greater than I am"?

<sup>2</sup>Mark xiii. 32; also Matt. xxiv. 36. Synoptics again.

Father. This may give us a small hint as to the significance of the designation, Son (of God), which Jesus frequently uses of himself. And yet, notwithstanding the rank of the Son and his unique relation to the Father, the saying mentions something of which the Son was ignorant. But it does so as if it were a strange and surprising thing that one who enjoyed his nearness to God and his intimacy with God should not be aware of it.

The same relation of unique intimacy with God is involved in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, who maltreated and slew, first, the servants of the lord of the vineyard, and then his son. And indeed it is implied in all the passages where Jesus by speaking of himself as the Son, the Son of God, expresses the consciousness of standing in a relation to God closer than that of men or angels.

If now we examine the Gospel of John, we shall find this relation of unique intimacy

with God declared by Jesus with frequency. A few instances will serve to illustrate. In John x. 38 he says, "The Father is in me, and I in the Father." This is perhaps a different way of expressing what he had already said in verse 30, "I and the Father are one." While this probably does not mean unity of metaphysical essence, but, according to the context, unity of purpose and action in the plan of redemption, yet, even so, it represents the Father as being in the Son and moving in him in such a way that the Father acts in the things planned and done by the Son in his world-relation as Redeemer; while the Son does nothing that is without the sphere of the Father's person and action. The same thing is declared by Jesus in a general sense in John v. 19-23: "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father doing. . . . For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth. . . . For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth

them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom he will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son that all men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” Again, in verse 26, “As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself.” For the Son could not quicken whom he would (verse 21), nor cause the dead to live (verse 25), if he had not in himself a divine and independent fountain of life like the Father, which the Father gave him. He is conscious of bearing such a relation to the Father that others must first come to him and through him come to the Father: “No man cometh to the Father but by me.”<sup>1</sup>

As in the passage already quoted from the synoptics, he singled himself out from among men, and spoke of himself in a singular way in relation to the Holy Spirit; so in the Gos-

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<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 6.

pel of John he classes himself with God the Father in a common plural: "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make *our* abode with him."<sup>1</sup> What would be thought of any man, even the greatest and best of prophets or apostles, who should say of himself and the eternal, absolute God, "we"? "If any man will love me, Isaiah, we, the eternal, invisible, unsearchable God, and I (Isaiah), will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "If any man will love me, Paul, and keep my word, the great and holy God and I (Paul) will come to him, and we will make our abode with him."<sup>2</sup>

These instances from the Gospel of John hardly go beyond what is implied in sayings of Jesus to be found in the synoptics, such as the one already considered from Matthew xi. and Luke x. And even if they do, it is

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<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John xiv. 1: "Believe in God and believe in me."

well to bear in mind, on the other hand, that in the Gospel of John Jesus expresses his absolute dependence on God, as is nowhere done in the synoptics; as in John v. 19, he says, "The Son can do nothing of himself"; John v. 30, "I can of myself do nothing." As to his teaching, he said (John vii. 16), "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." Again, John xiv. 24, he says, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." See also John viii. 40.

If Jesus bore the relation to God which is implied in all the utterances we have considered, it is not strange that he should have called himself the Son, the Son of God, and have called God his Father, in a sense entirely unique. For if he had the consciousness expressed or implied in these utterances, it must have been part of, or based on, the consciousness of a relation to God that was intimate, vital, essential, organic. The relation of sonship has all these qualities. On



the other hand, if he had the consciousness of sonship, it is not strange that he should have had and expressed the consciousness of that intimacy with God which is implied in all the utterances we have been studying.

Whence and when did he get the consciousness of sonship? It falls infinitely short of the truth to say that he derived it from the fact that the title Son of God was a current designation of the Messiah. It seems unreasonable to suppose that he would take up a superficial, official phrase to designate himself with, when he knew, as the records show (not merely the official relation of Messiah but), all the deep experiences that were involved in a sonship that was real and vital. He could hardly have adopted the phrase from current usage. For he knew God as his Father and himself as his Son from God's own testimony at his baptism. Nay, he knew God as his Father in the clear, calm depths of his pure soul when he was but a child, as shown in the incom-

parable sketch in our third Gospel.<sup>1</sup> In all probability when he first came to consciousness, there came to him the consciousness that God was his Father.<sup>2</sup> Certainly it was not learned from any outside source, not even from his mother. For she “understood not the saying which he spake unto them.”<sup>3</sup>

It seems a little strange that, with the facts of the record before them, students should go looking about through current Jewish literature, or even through the Old Testament, for the origin of Jesus’ self-designation as the Son of God. That he was the Son of God was a matter of consciousness with him from the opening of his consciousness, and was the ground of his consciousness of being the Messiah, as we have seen.<sup>4</sup> “He did not, from the knowledge of his Messianic mission, conclude that special qualities of his person were unique, and that he stood in a peculiar personal relation to God. But, on the

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<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 40-50. <sup>2</sup> Compare Study I. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Luke ii. 50. <sup>4</sup> See Study III.

contrary, his consciousness of a peculiar personal relation to God furnished *the groundwork* for the knowledge of his Messianic mission. Certainly it is true that Jesus in his consciousness of being, in the sense referred to, 'the Son of God,' had a *firm basis* for his consciousness of being called to the Messiahship."<sup>1</sup> "The consciousness of his Messianic calling *was founded* on the knowledge of his unique relation to God."<sup>2</sup> "The consciousness of being the Messiah *undoubtedly rested* on the *certainty* of being the Son of God, and *therefore* of knowing the Father and being constrained to proclaim that knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

In perfect accord with his consciousness of possessing a unique knowledge of God, and of bearing a vital relation of intimacy with God, is the attitude which he habitually assumes toward the earlier revelation and the

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<sup>1</sup> Wendt, Teaching of Jesus, ii. 124, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Weiss, Life of Christ, ii. 342.

<sup>3</sup> Harnack, History of Dogma, i. 64, note.

authority which he exercises in reference to the Old Testament. Though fully recognizing the divine origin and the divine authority of the revelation contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in the law and the prophets, as well as the divine origin and authority of the institutions therein prescribed, nevertheless he did in both word and act, explicitly and implicitly, express the consciousness of possessing authority superior to that of lawgiver, prophet, priest, or king, authority to modify, amend, extend, correct, or abrogate what in those Scriptures was not in accordance with the knowledge of truth which *he* was conscious of possessing. Everything said or prescribed in that older revelation was to be judged by the standard which he possessed, and was to yield to his authority.

An instructive example of his consciousness of superiority to institutions of the earlier dispensation may be found in the passage which describes the eating of wheat

by his disciples as they walked through the wheat fields on the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

In answer to the Pharisees who charged his disciples with breaking the Sabbath in rubbing out the grains of wheat, he said: "Have you not read in the law, how that the priests in the temple, so to speak, profane the Sabbath by doing on the Sabbath the work required for the services of the temple, and are guiltless? But I say unto you that one greater than the temple is here." He goes on immediately to say further: "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." If the sanctity of the temple is such that the priests are justified and guiltless in doing work required for its services on the Sabbath, how much more were his disciples guiltless in serving him who was superior to the temple and Lord of the Sabbath! His authority, under which his disciples acted, was superior to the sanctity of the temple and the law of the Sabbath.

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<sup>1</sup> The incident is given in Matthew xii. 1-8.

In his conversation with the woman of Samaria, he virtually declared that the whole divinely prescribed system of temple worship and ritualistic service was superseded and done away, and from that hour was to have nothing to do with the true worship and service of God.

As to the law and the prophets, we have seen in a previous chapter how Jesus showed the consciousness of superiority to these, and in fact exercised his authority over the law, both moral and ceremonial, by extending, supplementing, correcting, and abrogating according to the ideal furnished in his own innate knowledge of God and truth. In the same way he expanded and "fulfilled" the imperfect outline of truth discerned and delivered by the inspired prophets and sages of the old dispensation.

Solomon was reputed to be, and probably was, the wisest of the Old Testament sages whose profound reflections on life and its duties are preserved in the so-called wisdom

literature of the Old Testament; and yet Jesus expressed the consciousness of a wisdom deeper than any that was discovered by Solomon: "A greater than Solomon is here."

When in answer to his question as to the interpretation which current opinion had formed of him, the disciples answered that some held him to be Jeremiah, others Elijah, while all held him to be of the class of prophets, none of these conceptions, high as they were, especially for Jews, satisfied *his* consciousness. It was only when the confession of Peter placed him above and beyond all the prophets, and singled him out as Messiah and Son of God, that he *was* satisfied with their estimate of him. And it was only for their own good that he was concerned to have them know who and what he was, and not for the sake of the honor of it; for according to all three synoptics,<sup>1</sup> he *charged* them to tell no man that

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 20; Mark ix. 30; Luke ix. 21.

he was what they had discovered him to be. On another occasion—it was when he had just given expression to the consciousness of a relation of unique intimacy with God—he turned to his disciples and said *privately* to them: “Blessed are the eyes which see what ye see; *for I say unto you*, Many prophets and kings desired to see what ye see and saw it not, and to hear what ye hear and heard it not.”<sup>1</sup>

These examples are sufficient to show what the consciousness of this singular being was in relation to the revelations and institutions of the divinely given system of the Old Testament and in comparison with the greatest of the divinely commissioned lawgivers, prophets, and sages of the old dispensation.

There was another element in the consciousness of Jesus which was peculiar to him, differentiating him from all religious teachers and setting him apart from the



greatest and holiest men of Israel's history. To the paralytic they brought to him on one occasion<sup>1</sup> he said, with a composure which betrayed no consciousness that he was assuming a doubtful prerogative or invading a province not legitimately his own, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And if we may trust the unanimous testimony of the first three Gospels, the reality of his authority and the genuineness of the pardon were demonstrated to the eyes of the beholders by nothing less than a miracle.

In the same spirit of ineffable gentleness, and with the same tone of unquestioning conscious right, he pronounced forgiven the many sins of the woman who was a sinner.<sup>2</sup>

Now it cannot be said that Jesus exer-

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 2-6; Mark ii. 3-12; Luke v. 18-25.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 36-50. It would be difficult to think of this matchless sketch as a forgery or as a legend that grew, even if there had been time for legends to grow between the death of Jesus and the date of Luke's Gospel.

cised this authority on the ground that it is a prerogative belonging to good men in general, to be exercised by them in the name of God. For the words that he used, by way of prefacing the miracle which furnished a visible demonstration of his authority, imply that, according to his consciousness, it was an authority *peculiar* to the Son of man: "That ye may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins," then said he to the paralytic, "Take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." Nor can it be maintained that Jesus here uses the phrase, Son of man, as a representative designation of himself in the sense that as a representative of man he here does what belongs to him in common with other good men. He elsewhere and frequently declares that it is also his peculiar prerogative to be the supreme and final judge of men. In most of these sayings he designates himself as the Son of man. It can hardly be inferred from this fact that he

meant that other good men are to share in this awful function of judgment.

But we have not by any means exhausted the contents of the consciousness of Jesus when we have considered that side of it which related him to God. There was yet another element in his consciousness which was never an element in the consciousness of any other human being. He has expressed in many instances and in manifold ways, direct and indirect, the consciousness of a relation to the entire race of human kind which was peculiar to himself, which was not even shared in by any other, prophet or apostle, saint or seer. This unique relation to mankind was such an essential, inseparable element of his consciousness that he again and again gives incidental expression to it, even when discoursing on topics of a general nature.

At the opening of the great moral discourse, known as the Sermon on the Mount,

speaking of the persecutions that will fall to the lot of the disciples, he says, "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, *for my sake*."<sup>1</sup> Luke in his report of the same discourse has, "for the sake of the Son of man."<sup>2</sup> Again, in the same discourse, he says of himself, "Think not that *I* came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."<sup>3</sup> In warning his hearers against the delusion of a spurious profession of piety, in the latter part of the same discourse, he refers, in a purely incidental way, to his own relation to men as Lord and Judge: "Not every one that saith unto *me*, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . . Many will say to me *in that day*, Lord, Lord, etc. . . . Then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you*: depart from *me*, ye that work iniquity."<sup>4</sup> Again, in his vivid de-

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 11.    <sup>2</sup> Luke vi. 22.    <sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. vii. 21-23.

scription of the last judgment, he not only represents the Son of man as executing the functions of final judge; in the course of the description, with apparent unconsciousness of the fact, he speaks of himself as "the King." "Then shall *the King* say unto them on his right hand." <sup>1</sup> In this way incidental allusions to his peculiar relation to men are inwoven into the very texture of his discourse on all subjects; and he can hardly speak on any subject without some way bringing it in.

When he comes to speak directly and explicitly on this subject, he is conscious of a necessity that men should follow him, and forsake all in order to follow him with primary and supreme devotion: "Therefore, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." <sup>2</sup> More than this, he is conscious of a necessity that men should be attached to him by a bond deeper and stronger than

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 31, 34. <sup>2</sup> Luke xiv. 33.

that which binds them to the very nearest and dearest of human relations: "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father, and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."<sup>1</sup> To be ashamed of him in this world, even though acknowledgment of him cost life itself, will result in being turned away from his favor when he comes as Judge and from the possession of eternal life, at the last day.<sup>2</sup> Collision with him will result in utter ruin.<sup>3</sup> He declares there is peculiar value and virtue in acts that are done in his name and for his sake.<sup>4</sup>

He is for men the sole revealer of God and of truth. In the profound saying in Matt. xi. 27 and Luke x. 22, he declares of himself, "No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." In a passage of similar import in the Gospel of John he

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 26, and in other instances.

<sup>2</sup> Mark viii. 38. <sup>3</sup> Luke xx. 18. <sup>4</sup> Mark ix. 41.

says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me."<sup>1</sup> These and similar sayings, while asserting a unique relation to God and a unique knowledge of him, assert, as well, a singular and exclusive ability on the part of Jesus to reveal the truth concerning God to men. Once more, the consciousness of his unique relation to the world as the revealer of truth is expressed in those vivid and beautiful words, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."<sup>2</sup> In *three other instances* he declares the same thing: "When I am in the world, I am the light of the world."<sup>3</sup> "Yet a little while is the light among you."<sup>4</sup> "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness."<sup>5</sup> In these and passages of similar

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<sup>1</sup>John xiv. 6.    <sup>2</sup>John viii. 12.    <sup>3</sup>John ix. 5.

<sup>4</sup>John xii. 35.    <sup>5</sup>John xii. 46.

import he has expressed over and over again the consciousness of being the mediator of truth to mankind.

But he is conscious of being to them the mediator of *life*, as well. We have already noticed this, in brief, in connection with what was said concerning his consciousness of a relation of unique intimacy with God: "As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself."<sup>1</sup> As in this saying, so, frequently, a statement by Jesus of his relation to God is accompanied by a corresponding statement of his relation to man. To Thomas in the upper room, bewildered over what he had said about going away, he spoke these profound but comforting words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."<sup>2</sup> To Martha, troubled with the mystery of death, and clinging to the hope of a resurrection of her

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<sup>1</sup> John v. 26.    <sup>2</sup> John xiv. 6.



Beloved in the far-away future, he said, "I am the resurrection and the life."<sup>1</sup> In the beautiful words of John xv. he teaches his disciples that it is necessary for them to abide in him, if they want true life, as it is for the branch to remain in vital connection with the vine. He, in external guise the peasant artisan of Nazareth in Galilee, was, nevertheless, in his consciousness, "the life-tree of humanity."

One of the titles that express the relation he sustained to men was that of Messiah. This title he was very chary of using himself; and yet he undoubtedly had the consciousness of being what this word was intended to represent. In his prayer in John xvii. 3, he says, "That they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even *Jesus Christ*." When the Samaritan woman said to him, "I know that Messiah cometh," he replied,

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<sup>1</sup> John xi. 25.

“I that speak unto thee am he.”<sup>1</sup> Again, in Luke xxiv. 26, in his conversation with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, he said, “Behoved it not *the Christ* to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?” To the assembled disciples in Jerusalem, after his resurrection, he said, “Thus it is written, that *the Christ* should suffer.” (Luke xxiv. 46.) In Mark xiv. 62, in answer to the question of the high priest, “Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed?” he said, “I am.” In Matt. xvi. 17 he accepts the title of Christ which Peter had given him, in saying, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” These, with Matt. xxiii. 10, are the few instances in the Gospels where he uses the title of himself, and in every case but the first he uses it indirectly. In two cases he accepts it from others. He probably did not use the title

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<sup>1</sup>John iv. 26.

oftener, first, because of the gross misconception and perversion of it by all classes of the Jews,<sup>1</sup> and he knew that to have declared his Messiahship before he had corrected popular views and set forth the spiritual nature of his mission and work, would probably have excited a popular insurrection and provoked the hostility of Rome; and secondly, because it was an official title descriptive of the office he was to fill rather than of what he in himself essentially was. He shrank from calling himself Messiah as a modest man would refrain from calling himself by his official title, as "Judge" or "General." However, he did not leave it a matter of doubt that he was the Messiah of the Old Testament and of God.<sup>2</sup> In the saying recorded in Luke iv. 21, while he even here refrains from using the *title*, there is an open assumption of the *functions* of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Study VI. on the Kingdom of God.

<sup>2</sup> In spite of Martineau's view, *Seat of Authority in Religion*, pp. 329-358.

Messiahship. He declared that he was the subject of Old Testament prophecy and the end of the Old Testament dispensation; that is, he was Messiah.<sup>1</sup> And once, at a solemn moment of his life, he emphatically declared he was Messiah. (Mark xiv. 62.) What dignity the office of Messiah involved may be seen in what Jesus says of it in relation to David, in his interview with the Pharisees. He said to them (Matt. xxii. 42), "What think you of the Christ [Messiah]? Whose son is he?" They say, "The son of David." Quoting the one hundred and tenth Psalm, he replies in substance: "The inspired psalmist attributes to the Christ,

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<sup>1</sup> Harnack is right in saying that in spite of the criticisms the fact that Jesus called himself Messiah stands the test of the most minute investigation. (History of Dogma, i. 63, note.) But he seems to go too far in saying, "Jesus gradually declared himself to the people as Messiah by the names he assumed; for the names King, Lord, Son of David, Son of man, Son of God, all denote the Messianic office, and were familiar to the greater part of the people."

for whom you are looking, a far higher position than that of David's son, a mere prince of Israel, who, as you suppose, will set up a kingdom on earth like that of David, only enlarged and glorified. The sacred writer speaks of the Christ as David's LORD, sitting at Jehovah's right hand and ruling forever as an exalted Priest-king."<sup>1</sup> This exalted dignity he was conscious of possessing, for he knew he was Messiah. But he did not therefore call himself Son of God and Son of man because he was officially Messiah. On the contrary, he was conscious of being called to the office and dignity of Messiah, because he was Son of God and Son of man. He arrived at the conclusion that he was Messiah because he was conscious of being a unique person among men, with unique relations Godward and manward. We know he had the inward consciousness of being the Son of God from childhood, and he received at his bap-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Davison's Praises of Israel.

tism an outward testimony from his Father in authentication of his inward consciousness. He was also conscious of being a man; but, being such a man as he knew he was, he was conscious that his manhood, though normal, was yet unique, representative. Hence he needed a new name and he chose one, which, whether we can analyze its full content or not, every one feels to be most appropriate and impressive: "The Son of man." It makes little difference whether he was influenced in the choice of this self-designation by the passage in Daniel vii. 13, or in Psalm viii. 4, or Ezekiel ii. 1; iii. 1, 4, 16; v. 1; vi. 1, etc.; or by passages in the book of Enoch.<sup>1</sup> For it is used by Jesus in senses which it could not bear in those places. If it was adopted by him from any of these sources,

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters xlvi.-lxxi., pp. 127-186, edition of Charles. See a full discussion of the phrase, "Son of man," in Charles's edition of the book of Enoch, pp. 312-317.

it underwent a transformation in his thought and use, and had meanings higher, deeper, broader, and more manifold than in any previous use, biblical or other; just as Jesus' conception of the kingdom of God was immeasurably in advance of either the biblical or the current conception.<sup>1</sup>

Nor can it be maintained that the phrase, Son of man, is merely a synonym of Messiah. As Professor Orr says, "There is no evidence apart from the *doubtful* book of Enoch that it was a current title of Messiah at that time." On the other hand, the Gospels contain indications that it was not. According to John xii. 34, "the multitude" of Jews said to Jesus: "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" If this passage is to be trusted, it seems to afford proof that the phrase, Son of man, was

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<sup>1</sup> See Studies VI. and VIII. on the Kingdom of God.

not a synonym for Messiah among the Jews. Moreover, if by assuming the title, Son of man, *as a current designation of Messiah*, he meant to identify himself as Messiah before the people, why did he not oftener assume the title of Messiah itself? As a matter of fact he did not, *in an explicit declaration and of his own accord*, call himself Messiah a single time, though he did call himself the Son of man habitually, throughout his ministry. Messiah he was, officially; the Son of man he was, essentially.

He was the Son of humanity, so to speak. He was born of humanity, a member of the human race, dependent on human parentage for his human existence; one with humanity, sharing the conditions and experiences of humanity. He shared the lot of the poorest of his fellow-men, for "the Son of man had not where to lay his head."<sup>1</sup> He shared their weakness and dependence.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 20; Luke ix. 58



He was defenseless in the hands of his enemies. The Son of man was betrayed<sup>1</sup> into the hands of bitter-hearted, merciless men, suffered<sup>2</sup> as the helpless victim of their hate, unable, except by the abandonment of duty, to extricate himself from their malice, and from murder.

But as the Son of humanity, he was here for the behoof of humanity, and all his life and powers were to be expended in the service of humanity. "For the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve."<sup>3</sup> "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost,"<sup>4</sup> and even "to give his life a ransom for many."<sup>5</sup>

As the Son of man, he puts the high pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Luke ix. 44; Matt. xx. 18; xxvi. 2, 24, 45; Luke xxii. 22, 48, 69; Mark ix. 31; x. 33; xiv. 21, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvii. 12; Luke ix. 22; Mark viii. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xix. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28.

rogatives and powers which belong to him as the Son of God at the service of humanity, and will exercise them for their benefit, even as "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins";<sup>1</sup> "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath,"<sup>2</sup> and for man's good may legislate a new Sabbath. Last and highest, the awful function of judgment, which, as the Son of God, he has the *prerogative* of exercising, he will, as the Son of man, have the *preparation* for exercising, because as the Son of man, having passed through all human experiences of conflict, he knows the meaning of all our human frailty. "*The Son of man* shall come in the glory of *his Father*,"<sup>3</sup> and "the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory,"<sup>4</sup> for "*the Father* hath given him authority to ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Mark ii. 10; Matt. ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 8; Mark. ii. 28; Luke vi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xvi. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xix. 28; xxv. 31; xiii. 41; xxiv. 27, 30, 37, 44; xxvi. 64.

ecute judgment *because he is the Son of man.*”<sup>1</sup>

The Son of humanity, he is of humanity and for humanity, in birth, in life, in death, and in judgment. The designation, Son of man, then, habitually used by Jesus to express his nature and his relations to humanity, indicates that he was conscious of standing in a unique relation to the race of mankind in a general sense.

But he has expressed the consciousness that his death, in particular, was in some vital way connected with their well-being and their destiny, in what particular way there is not room here to inquire. In a striking passage in the Gospel of Mark,<sup>2</sup> with parallel in Matthew, he says of himself that the Son of man came “to give his life a ransom for many.”<sup>3</sup> In the institution of that singular and significant rite, the Lord’s Supper, by which his

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<sup>1</sup> John v. 27. <sup>2</sup> Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

followers were, in this objective way, continually to remind themselves of his *death* and, in a sense, to repeat it to the end of the present dispensation, there is an expression, stronger than words can make it, of his consciousness that in some vital way his death was connected with the well-being of men. More specifically, in the account of this institution as given by Matthew,<sup>1</sup> the shedding of his blood is directly connected with the forgiveness of sins. The same or even greater emphasis is given to the meaning and value of his death in the extraordinary sayings in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel: "The bread which I will give is my flesh, *for the life of the world*. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the 'Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28: Τὸ αἷμά μου τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

drinketh my blood hath eternal life." (John vi. 51-54.)

As we have seen, he represents himself as conscious of being charged with another function, which puts him in relation to the race of men, and which is peculiar to himself; a function which it is altogether inconceivable any other man should be charged with, which is nothing less than appalling by reason of the infinite difficulty of discharging it rightly and the measureless and awful responsibility attaching to it. And yet Jesus had no hesitation in saying that this awful function belonged to himself. On the contrary, he asserted it plainly, repeatedly, directly and indirectly, with the calmness of unquestioning certitude and the consistency of a consciousness that knew no wavering. It was the function of judging the world. The instances where he declares or alludes to his investiture with this prerogative are so many and so well known that it is not necessary to cite them

here. They occur throughout his ministry, from the Sermon on the Mount, where he says, "Many will say to me *in that day*, Lord, Lord, but I will profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity," to his declaration to the high priest, when he was on trial (Mark xiv. 62).<sup>1</sup> However, this consciousness of his is not so astonishing after all. If he was *in all other respects* what he expresses the consciousness of being, he is all the more perfectly qualified to be the Judge of men, in that he himself also was a man. He knew all the meaning of being a man

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<sup>1</sup>It is generally thought, and by many definitely maintained, that the fourth Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus' self-consciousness, while the other three do not concern themselves with this phase of the history of Jesus, but confine themselves to the narration of his outward activity and the report of his practical discourses on moral subjects. This is only apparently true. The survey of the contents of the self-consciousness of Jesus, as given in this Study, is drawn, for the most part, from the synoptic Gospels.

and subject to all the frailty of human nature. Hence in the descriptions of himself as the Judge of men he calls himself the Son of man, and once he even gives this as the reason why he is to be their Judge. (John v. 27.)

#### THE PARADOX.

And yet, though he is forever conscious of occupying such a position, of bearing such a relation to God on the one hand, and to the whole race of mankind on the other, of being charged with such vital and awful functions for all humanity, and of holding a rank and place which immeasurably transcend all human dignities, and though he is constantly giving expression to this consciousness, either directly or incidentally, there is never an utterance of it that betrays personal egotism or pride. There is no suggestion of what we mean by self-consciousness. Nor is there an act in all his life that is an act of self-seeking. He demands with solemn insistence

that men shall believe on him and shall abandon all in order to become his followers; he has the consciousness of being able to deliver them from sin and sorrow and to give them rest; he demands that men shall commit their souls and destinies to him; he promises that if they will come to him they shall have life and be rewarded with everlasting blessedness in a future eon; such absolute authority over men and such power to bless men he has the consciousness of possessing; and yet he does not allow himself to *enjoy* this companionless distinction, to take any pleasure in it, or to reap any advantage from it. He considers it his lot to renounce even the ordinary innocent joys of human life, such as those of family and home, and to suffer alone. He shrinks from or repels every suggestion of friends and followers, who mean well but do not understand him, that he may have anything but a homeless life of loneliness and suffering and sorrow and a death of agony and shame. Indeed,



we get the impression from reading those marvelous portraiture of him in the Gospels that, though he had an organic, ever-present consciousness of a companionless and unapproachable majesty of person and rank and function, yet he rather bore it as a burden than wore it as what we should call an honor.

“It will be found,” says Dr. Bushnell, “that in the common apprehension of men Jesus maintains the merit of most peculiar modesty, producing *no* impression more distinctly than that of his intense humility and lowliness. His worth is seen to be so great and his spirit so gentle that instead of being offended by the expressions of his self-consciousness, we take the impression of one in whom it is even a condescension to breathe our air. This impression is received as naturally and irresistibly by unbelievers as by his friends and followers. I do not recollect any skeptic or infidel who has even thought to accuse him as

a conceited person,"<sup>1</sup> notwithstanding the immeasurable superiority and unapproachable dignity of which he expresses an ever-present consciousness.

This paradox in the character of Jesus, as presented *in each of the Gospels*, is so well drawn out in the language of another that we venture to quote his words at some length: "To humanity struggling with its passions and its destiny, Christ says, 'Cling to me, cling ever closer to me.' If we believe St. John, Jesus represents himself as the Light of the world, as the Bread of life, as the Shepherd of the souls of men, as the Way to immortality, as the Life-tree of humanity. And if we refuse to believe John's statement that he used *these words*, we cannot deny, without rejecting all the evidence before us, that he used words which have substantially the same meaning. We can-

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<sup>1</sup> Modified from Chapter X. on "The Character of Jesus" in *Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 291.

not deny that he commanded men to leave everything and attach themselves to him; that he declared himself King, Lord, and Judge of men; that he promised to give rest to all the weary and heavy-laden; that he taught them to hope for life from feeding on his body and blood. But these enormous pretensions were advanced by one whose special peculiarity was an almost womanly tenderness and humility.<sup>1</sup> And yet so clear to

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<sup>1</sup>And yet Jesus was not effeminate or unmanly. He had the courage to teach a purely spiritual-ethical righteousness as contrasted with the externalism and ceremonialism of the leaders of the people. He had the courage to actively oppose their views and to declare before all the people that their righteousness was hypocrisy and themselves hypocrites. See Matt. vi. and xxiii. He had the courage to stand alone in his view and exposition of the kingdom of God and of the meaning of Messiahship. He turned not aside when he saw that to persevere in this course was to intensify the hatred of the ruling classes and to make certain his death. Though he knew and declared that it was to go straight to his death, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and there delivered himself up

him was his own dignity and importance to the human race, with which his own opinion of himself had nothing to do, that in the same breath in which he asserts it in the most unmeasured language, he alludes apparently with entire unconsciousness to his own humility: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.' If his biographers have delineated his character faithfully, Jesus was one naturally contented with obscurity, lacking the restless desire for distinction and eminence which is so common among great men, disliking competition and disputes about who should be greatest, finding something bombastic in the titles of royalty, fond of what is simple and homely, of children and of poor people, occupying himself so much with the con-

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to his murderers and of his own accord endured all the ignominy and agony which his enemies could heap upon him. While he was the tenderest of men, he was by the severest tests the manliest and the bravest of men.

cerns of others, with the relief of sickness and want, that the temptation to exaggerate his own importance did not occur to him; lastly, entertaining for the human race a feeling so singularly fraternal that he was likely to reject as a sort of treason the impulse to set himself in any selfish way above them. Jesus, as it appears from his biographies, was this humble man. When we have pondered this fact, we may be in condition to estimate the force of the evidence, which, submitted to his mind, could induce him, in direct opposition to all his tastes and instincts, to lay claim, persistently and with the calmness of entire conviction, in opposition to the whole religious world, to an authority and a dominion more transcendent, more universal, and more complete than the most delirious votary of glory ever aspired to in his most extravagant dreams.”<sup>1</sup> And, withal, these claims excite in us no feeling of

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecce Homo*, pp. 191-194.

incongruity. They create no offense. They do not seem to be a misfit. This extreme paradox in the character of Jesus, so consistently and so consummately carried out from beginning to end, seems to give to the records the stamp of reality and historicity. The character of Jesus as here portrayed, unconsciously exhibiting and sustaining this paradox, is its own self-evidence.

To sum up: We have seen that Jesus was a man in the full sense, "nothing human alien to him"; and yet he was distinguished from all other men in the singular combination in a perfect degree of all the excellencies of human character, and still more widely distinguished from all men in that he was without sin, that he never asked for forgiveness, he never gave expression to a feeling of penitence or regret. In repeated instances he expressed the consciousness of an authority superior to the laws of the Old Testament and the institutions of the old dispensation, and of a rank and authority supe-

rior to that of Old Testament prophets. He assumed, exercised, and verified authority to forgive sin. He expressed the consciousness of possessing a unique knowledge of God, and verified that consciousness before all the ages of the world by the matchless, and as yet unfathomed, truth which he revealed to men concerning God. He expressed the consciousness of sustaining a relation of unique intimacy with God, a deep, essential, organic relation, which is probably best expressed and best described in his habitual self-designation, The Son—the Son of God.

On the other hand, he was conscious of a representative and singular relation, not to the Jews alone nor to his age, but to the race of mankind: He is their Lord and King; he is the sole and exclusive revealer to them of God and truth, the sole and exclusive mediator to them of life; he is the Messiah, the one Anointed of God for revealing truth, for imparting life to men; by his life and in his death he becomes for

men the Way to God; he sets himself over against the whole sinful race of men as their Redeemer, and ultimately as their supreme and final Judge.

And yet with the consciousness of this transcendent, this solitary dignity and majesty, he showed himself destitute of any selfish consciousness of his own importance. As he was unique in his consciousness of dignity and majesty, so he was unique among men in meekness and humility.

Now what are we to say of a being of whom all this is true? We cannot affirm that he was mere man. We know that no man is all this. All this is not true of any man, nor is any single item of it true of any man, not of the greatest and best the world has ever known.

And if Jesus Christ was not mere man, in what category shall we place him? If he was not human, merely, what was he, if he was not divine?



## XIV.

### The Resurrection of Jesus:

#### ITS HISTORICITY AND SIGNIFICANCE.

THE historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus should be investigated apart from theological prepossessions in favor of it or philosophical prejudices against it. The holding of certain philosophical views as much predisposes some minds to underestimate its value as theological training predisposes others to overestimate it. *A priori* considerations, such as the uniformity of nature and the antecedent improbability of miracles, especially such a miracle as the resurrection, should not be allowed to interfere with a judicial and just estimate of the evidence itself.

On *a priori* grounds, and before he studied the historical evidence for it, the writer (he may venture to say) was conscious of misgivings as to the actual occur-

rence of the resurrection of Jesus, if not a positive indisposition to believe in it, not so much because of the antecedent improbability of miracles, as on the ground that he could see no adequate reason for this particular one. The life, the teaching, and the work of Jesus seemed complete without it, and it seemed altogether improbable that so great a miracle should, as it were, be wasted. Not only did it seem to be unnecessary, it seemed inconsistent with two of the most striking facts in the life of Jesus. It seemed to discount that unique dread of death that Jesus showed again and again, but especially in the Gethsemane struggle. For if he was so soon to return to life, how could death seem so terrible? It seemed also to discount the value of his death, on which such emphasis was laid by Jesus, especially during the latter part of his ministry. For how could his death mean so much, if he was so soon to return to life? But, upon closer examination of the subject,

the historical evidence was found to be very strong, if not convincing, despite these adverse *a priori* considerations.

There is much significance in the way this evidence has been viewed and treated by those who have not been willing to accept the fact. The evidence for the fact is such that it has evoked and taxed the ingenuity of men to the utmost to meet it and to overcome it. In other words, the evidence is such that men who have declined to accept it have not only not found it easy to break it, they have never seemed to rest satisfied that it was broken. They are continually laying on themselves the task of finding new ways of breaking it. What has been done does not suffice or satisfy. Adverse criticism is continually resubjecting this evidence to the rack, as if it were never sure that it was effectually disposed of. This seems, at least, to indicate that in their tacit estimation the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is very strong and very stubborn.

The historical evidence for the resurrection is direct and indirect.

I. The fact is attested in six of the books<sup>1</sup> and by five of the writers of the New Testament, in the form of historical narration. Besides this, it is referred to as a fact, accepted by writer and reader, in the Epistles, where the object is not historical statement, but instruction or exhortation. So that it underlies, as a broad basis, the whole of the New Testament.

There are four distinct records of the resurrection of Jesus in the four Gospels, records which betray no dependence on each other or knowledge of each other. So far are they from being dependent on each other, they differ almost to the point of discrepancy. Indeed, some persons, not only among scholarly and critical readers, but among laymen, have found it hard to believe the common fact of the resurrection

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<sup>1</sup>The four Gospels, the Acts, and 1 Corinthians.

recorded by them all, because of the apparent inconsistencies and even contradictions which they think they find in the details. Inasmuch as the four accounts are so entirely independent, it would be well to examine each one in detail, if it were possible. We must, in any case, give special attention to the record of one or two of them.

It is to be remembered that in reading the Gospel of Luke we are reading the work of a man who has given us in a preface, which has always been admired for its moderation, dignity, and straightforwardness, a candid statement of the character of the sources whence he drew his information and of the method of his research.<sup>1</sup> It appears that Luke had access to those who were *eyewitnesses*.<sup>2</sup> He does not say or claim that he was himself an eyewitness, as he might well have done, if he had been disposed to invent

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Study II. pp. 28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Contrary to McGiffert in *Apostolic Age*, pp. 577, 578.

history instead of recording facts. If it be thought that the fear of detection and exposure by those who knew he was not an eyewitness kept him from claiming to be such, it may be said that the same fear would have kept him equally from writing that he learned these things from those who were eyewitnesses, if he had not so learned them. We may therefore accept with confidence his statement that he derived his information from eyewitnesses. But he declares further that he exercised the utmost care in making his investigations, the general motive for which was probably strengthened by the fact that there were "many" "narratives" in circulation which may not have been made up of properly authenticated facts, or marked by accuracy of statement. He says with fearless honesty that he had traced the course of all things accurately from the beginning. He then gives a statement of his purpose in putting together this narrative. It is that his reader might know the *certain-*

ty of those things in which he had been instructed by word of mouth.

The history which Luke then proceeds to give is in the true historical spirit. As far as can be tested, he is correct in fixing the dates, stating the facts, and collocating the events of contemporary history. This, in the nature of the case, finds ampler illustration in the other book of the New Testament, of which he is the author, the Acts of the Apostles. In this, the points of contact with contemporary history, political, social, and religious conditions, geography, etc., are very numerous, so that it affords a greater number and variety of tests than perhaps most other documents that have come down to us from antiquity, and every test only confirms the veracity and accuracy of the narrative.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, and *The Church in the Roman Empire*; Hackett's *Commentary on Acts*; Lightfoot on *Galatians*, Introduction, p. 184; Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*; *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, by Smith.

Professor Ramsay in his very able work, "St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen," places the "author of Acts among the historians of the first rank," and the book itself among "historical works of the highest order, in which a writer commands excellent means of knowledge, either through personal acquaintance or through access to original authorities, and brings to the treatment of his subject genius, literary skill, and sympathetic historical insight into human character and the movement of events" (pp. 2-4). See also pp. 383-390.

Bishop Lightfoot says: "The Acts of the Apostles, in the multiplicity and variety of its details, probably affords greater means of testing its general character for truth than any other ancient narrative in existence; and in my opinion it satisfies the tests fully."<sup>1</sup>

This careful and conscientious writer,

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<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot on Galatians, p. 184.



whose authorities were eyewitnesses, whose investigations were thorough and accurate, whose aim was "certainty," and whose veracity was verifiable and verified by many and minute tests, gives in the latter part of his Gospel an account of the empty tomb, the appearance of the risen Lord to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, to Peter, and to the Eleven and their companions. Why he did not give an account of other appearances also, it is not possible to tell with certainty. But it cannot be inferred from this that he knew of no others. For in the first chapter of his second book he declares that Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion by *many* poofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days." Moreover, his account of the ascension, as given in the Acts, is quite full and circumstantial, while in the Gospel it is barely alluded to. It thus appears that it was not the purpose of the evangelists to give a full and orderly statement of his appearances or

a cumulative and complete summary of the evidence for his resurrection.

After Luke had written the first book of his history of the origins of Christianity, he deliberately writes in his second book that Jesus showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs. But this is not all. In this same second book he records the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus, as where, in Acts ii. 32, he records that Peter says, "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." Again, Peter declares the same in Acts iii. 15, "Whom God raised up from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." Once again, Peter declares to the Sanhedrin that they had crucified Jesus but that God had raised him from the dead, Acts iv. 10; and in Acts iv. 33, "With power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

Yet again (Acts v. 30-32), to the Sanhedrin (cf. verse 21), Peter says, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye

slew, hanging him on a tree. . . . And we are witnesses of these things." At the house of Cornelius, Peter says once more, "Whom also they slew, him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

And people by thousands, who were in a position to know the general situation, and to cross-examine the witnesses, accepted the testimony of the apostles, and on the strength of it separated themselves from their past and from their people and committed themselves, with a fervor and an enthusiasm never before known, to a new life and a new order of things, though it cost ostracism, persecution, and sometimes death.<sup>1</sup> Luke records in this second book of his history that upon the testimony of eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, a movement,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Acts viii. 1; ix. 1.

incomparably the greatest and most revolutionary and at the same time the most beneficent the world has ever known, was begun, and upon it was established that institution which soon conquered and filled the world.

It is to be remembered that these several instances of the testimony of eyewitnesses of the resurrection, and the effect which followed this testimony in the establishment of Christianity, are recorded by the same writer whose conscientiousness and accuracy are so graphically brought to view in the preface to his first book, and whose veracity has been verified by so many and searching tests in his second book. For it is accepted and held by criticism that whoever may have written the third Gospel and the book of Acts, it was the same person.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the testimony borne by the writer of the third Gospel and the Acts, there is the

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<sup>1</sup> See McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, pp. 433, 578.

account of the resurrection given in Mark's Gospel, which is the earliest of the Gospels, and, in reality, rather the Gospel by Peter than by Mark. His account of the resurrection is very brief—indeed, seems to be a fragment. The abrupt ending of the second Gospel has led to the opinion that a part of it has been lost. If so, then his testimony as originally given was fuller than that which we have. If not, then it remains that Mark's account of so stupendous a fact seems disproportionately brief and almost unaccountably incomplete. It *seems* so from our standpoint. Indeed, the account in each of the four Gospels seems brief and incomplete. But the standpoint of the writers was so different from ours that just there may be found the explanation of their brevity. We have seen from the references to the book of Acts, that after the death of Jesus the transcendent, overshadowing fact of his resurrection had taken complete possession of the minds of

his disciples and had become the all-absorbing subject of their preaching. Not only so, through their preaching and their testimony it took possession of the minds of their hearers—of everybody. In such a situation there was little need and small motive for giving any circumstantial or comprehensive account of the resurrection, or any elaborate statement of the evidence substantiating the fact. It would be carrying coals to Newcastle. Everybody believed the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, *on the convincing oral testimony of eyewitnesses*. What need was there of a studied, cumulative, and complete statement of all the evidence that could have been gathered for substantiating the fact? And yet, no memoir of Jesus would be complete which did not include some statement of the resurrection.

It should be noted, in passing, that the histories of the resurrection which we have, without exception, confine the appearances of the risen Lord to believ-

ers,<sup>1</sup> and Peter distinctly says that God manifested him, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen beforehand of God.<sup>2</sup> Now, if the stories of Jesus' resurrection were inventions, the inventors would in all probability have represented him as appearing to multitudes of people, and would have surrounded it with an éclat commensurate with their estimate of the event. What thought or motive could have induced *inventors* to confine the appearances to a very few witnesses, and those believers? That they do so, is a strong proof of their veracity and makes their histories more probable. But they could hardly have foreseen this, and for this pur-

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<sup>1</sup> Not only so, they represent that even these were very backward in accepting the fact of his resurrection. They were slow to believe, hard to convince. Even while looking on his risen form, "some" of them "doubted." Matt. xxviii. 17. What motive could inventors have had for representing the resurrection as so hard to believe?

<sup>2</sup> Acts x. 41.

pose have all agreed in giving their narratives this turn.

If these observations be just, there is the less need for a particular examination of each of the four accounts as they are found in the Gospels. We may content ourselves with the suggestion that in concluding his account of the life of Jesus, each one, out of the abundance of material at hand, selected those details concerning the resurrection which best suited his purpose in writing or his personal taste and idiosyncrasy, and wrote them down without any thought of what others wrote, with the most artless simplicity. At the same time, it is admitted that in some minor and relatively unimportant details there are discrepancies which, with our present knowledge, we find no way of reconciling.

But we have in the New Testament the testimony of still another eyewitness. It is that of one of the remarkable men of the race. He was a man of immovable con-



servatism, of intense moral earnestness, and of unyielding firmness, not to say stubbornness of conviction; and he was, withal, the most conscientious, deliberate, and zealous opponent of the new faith in the ancient world. This man came in contact with such evidence for the resurrection of Jesus as to overcome his prejudices, break down his unbelief, conquer his pride of self-righteousness, and change him from the most conscientious and relentless persecutor into the most passionate lover of Jesus and the most zealous and untiring champion of Christianity. *The fact of his conversion*, ascribed, as it is, by himself to his persuasion of the resurrection of Jesus, is in itself a testimony to the resurrection which has never been explained by those who deny it. But beside this fact he has left on record explicit and formal *testimony* to the resurrection in one of his Epistles, one which is accepted as genuine by the most extreme and destructive critics. This is the remark-

able passage to be found in 1 Corinthians xv. 1-8. His testimony here is not single and simple; it is twofold:

1. To the fact, which he could easily test and which the tone of the passage seems to indicate he had tested, that others saw Jesus after his resurrection. It is intimated that at the time when he wrote, any one who wished, might even yet test his statements. For when he says that some of the eyewitnesses "had fallen asleep, but most remain," what does he mean, if not that those remaining could, even then, be questioned, if any doubted and desired confirmation of his statements?

2. To the fact that he himself, Paul, Saul, had seen Jesus after his resurrection. This he says in two places, 1 Cor. xv. 8, and 1 Cor. ix. 1. As already intimated, it was the fact that he had seen Jesus after his resurrection that changed this intensely earnest, this intensely moral man from an attitude of conscientious and relentless hos-

tility to the most passionate devotion and the most tireless and joyful service. Nor is the appearance of Jesus to Paul to be regarded as a subjective vision such as he had at other times. For he explicitly declares that it *concludes* the series of objective bodily appearances and thereby separates these from all subsequent visions, such as those mentioned in Acts xviii. 9.<sup>1</sup> (Compare Acts xvi. 9 and xxvii. 23, 24.)

Moreover, we must not overlook the passage in 1 Cor. ix. 1, where again Paul claims to have seen the Lord Jesus. This has a distinct significance. He was confronted by men who called in question his apostolic authority. "What right had he to interpret the Gospel in a peculiar way, he who had no apostolic authority like the Eleven, with whom he was declared to be at variance?" Conscious that he had this hostile attitude to reckon with, he says

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<sup>1</sup> See Meyer on 1 Cor. xv. 8.

among other things, "I have seen the Lord." It was certainly his interest to mean more than a subjective vision. For his antagonists might very readily answer, What is a mere mental vision compared to a *bona fide* companionship such as the Eleven enjoyed? It was to protect himself against such a suggestion that he here declares he had seen the risen Lord. He believed that the Eleven, that Peter, in particular, had seen the risen Saviour with the eye of the body, and he meant to claim for himself a vision of the same kind.<sup>1</sup>

II. There is also indirect testimony to the fact of Jesus' resurrection, which is no less strong than the direct. According to the sources, the disciples immediately after the death of Jesus were the most disappointed and hopeless of men. A little later, they are found having a confidence, a courage, and an enthusiasm which im-

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Apologetics*, p. 396.

pelled them to face the world with a declaration of his resurrection and to endure all sorts of dangers and persecutions because of their testimony. Moreover, it enabled them to convince thousands of others of the resurrection and to introduce and establish on the ground of this fact a new order, a new society of men with new moral principles, new moral energies, new moral character, and a new moral influence, which from that beginning went on till it revolutionized the thought, the theology, and the moral condition of the Roman empire and of the world. The change in the disciples, and the revolution which was wrought through them, can be accounted for by nothing but that to which, in the records, it is ascribed—their unquestioning belief, their absolute assurance of Christ's resurrection; and nothing could have produced this unquestioning and absolute assurance, but the *fact*. Only their belief in the fact of the resurrection could produce

and can account for so complete and speedy a change in the disciples and through them in the world; and only the fact of the resurrection can account for their belief.

Weiss, speaking of Baur, says: "The greatest critic of our century has acknowledged that, for the disciples, Jesus' resurrection had become a firm and incontestable certainty, and that for them this fact of their consciousness had all the reality of an historical event. But the same critic has had *to renounce any hope of explaining* the phenomenon."<sup>1</sup> Here, then, is the crux of criticism. The problem is to account for the belief of the disciples in the resurrection of Jesus and its effect upon them, in a way that leaves out the fact itself; or in other words, to explain away the fact, while admitting what cannot be denied or evaded—the belief of the disciples in the fact.

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Christ, p. 383.

Can it be explained on the ground that Jesus did not really die but only swooned and was thought to be dead, but afterwards revived? In the first place, the sources bear unanimous testimony to the fact that Jesus was dead; and John adds that, even after he was found to be dead, a Roman soldier drove his spear into his side, probably piercing the heart. In the second place, if he had come to life in the tomb, he could never have escaped from the sepulcher, sealed with the great stone and guarded by the Roman soldiery.

But in the third place, supposing that he did revive from a temporary swoon, and that he could have escaped alone and unaided from the rock-sealed and soldier-guarded tomb in a natural way, it *follows* that he thereafter continued to *live*, until at some time and in some way he died a natural death. Well, where did he live? How did he live? When and how did he die? Who will suggest an answer to these ques-

tions? If he did continue to live after having escaped from the tomb, he lived in the consciousness of a deception and a lie. Think, if you can, of Jesus hiding out and skulking about until his natural death in order to keep up the stupendous fraud of a pretended resurrection! Moreover, if, after reviving, he had concealed himself and did not appear to his disciples, how would they have come to a belief in his resurrection? On the other hand, if after reviving in a natural way he did appear to his disciples for the purpose of producing a belief in his resurrection, there is the conscious and deliberate purpose of deception and fraud on his part, which is irreconcilable with his character, and inconceivable. More than this, as Strauss himself has shown, it would have been impossible for a being who had stolen half dead out of the sepulcher, who crept about weak and ill and in need of medical service, and who at last yielded to his sufferings, to have given to his disciples



the impression that he was a conqueror over death and the grave, and the Prince of Life—an impression which lay at the bottom of all their future ministry. Such a resurrection could only have weakened the impression which he had made upon them in life and in death, and could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm and have elevated their reverence into worship.<sup>1</sup> Besides, they must have known of his subsequent dying, which would have dispelled the illusion of a resurrection!

For all these reasons, the swoon theory is untenable. Jesus did not swoon. He was not in a state of suspended animation. He was dead. And yet, on the morning of the third day, the body was gone. The records again bear clear and unanimous testimony that the tomb was empty; and this is *confirmed* by the consideration that, if the

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<sup>1</sup> Strauss, *New Life of Jesus*, i. 412.

tomb had not been empty, if the body of Jesus had not disappeared, it would have been the easiest and most obvious thing in the world for the authorities to refute the report of the resurrection by *producing* the body. But they did not. The body was gone. How is its absence to be accounted for? (1) The friends and disciples could not have removed it, for supposing Matthew's account of the guard to be true, they could not have eluded the guard. (2) "It is incredible that the disciples, *who did not believe* that their Master would rise from the dead, should at once, while smitten and despondent, have conceived the colossal fraud of stealing the body and deceiving the world."<sup>1</sup> They were the victims of a colossal disappointment. They were paralyzed. They were in no condition to victimize others, or even to think of victimizing others. They were pitifully unmanned

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert, *Student's Life of Jesus*, p. 402.

and utterly dazed. (3) If they had removed the body, it was of course for the purpose of *deception*, and they would have had a consciousness of fraud that would be absolutely irreconcilable with their subsequent behavior. It would have made their confidence and their courage and their whole conduct impossible and inconceivable. It is psychologically impossible that the disciples, with the consciousness of a lie, should have gone forth with the courage and enthusiasm which they exhibited, to conquer the world, and that by means of a conscious lie! (4) If the *disciples* had removed the body, the authorities doubtless could, and certainly would, by some means have compelled them to produce it in order to refute the report of the resurrection and throttle the new movement.

His *enemies* had no motive for removing the body, for the absence of the body would favor the claim of the resurrection. It was to their interest that the body should

be present. But if, for any conceivable or inconceivable reason, they had taken away the body, they would certainly have produced it, in order to refute the claim of the resurrection, and stay the progress of the pestiferous new sect.

The resurrection of Jesus cannot be explained away on the hypothesis of a swoon, or on the hypothesis that, though he was really dead, his body was removed from the tomb and the report of the resurrection invented and spread abroad as an explanation of its absence.

There is still another theory. It is, that, owing to the state of mind in which the death of their Master left them, it was easy for the disciples, after some time for reflection, to fancy that they did see him, and they either had visions of him or believed they had. Of course, they were mistaken, but they were honestly mistaken. This is called the vision hypothesis.

In the first place, the disciples were not in

a mental mood or state that was favorable to subjective visions of their dead friend and Lord restored to life and health. It is when men are hopeful, sanguine, eagerly expectant, and the imagination is thereby stimulated to an extraordinary facility and activity in that direction, that they are likely to persuade themselves that they see things which they long to see. Loving and hopeful expectancy *is* a stimulus to the imagination in this way. But we know they were in any mood but one of hopefulness and expectancy. They were utterly disheartened and cast down. They “*had* hoped that it was he that should redeem Israel”;<sup>1</sup> but now all hope was gone. His friends embalmed his body for burial,<sup>2</sup> laid it away in a tomb and closed the tomb with a great stone;<sup>3</sup> for they had no thought of anything but that he was dead forever. Only a few loving women had the

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 21.    <sup>2</sup> John xix. 39, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvii. 60; Mark xv. 46; Luke xxiii. 53; John xix. 42.

Prona  
They did  
Not  
Understand

courage to think of visiting the tomb, and that for putting more spices on his body, forgetting in their hopeless grief that the tomb was closed with a great stone. The men were scattered, appalled, stupefied, and did not think it worth while to look further after the corpse. And when the report reached their ears that the Lord was risen indeed, instead of responding to it with alacrity, as the vision theory would require, it sounded to them as "idle talk."<sup>1</sup> When it was reported to Thomas that the Lord was risen, so far was he from being in a receptive or credulous attitude, that he declared that only the thrusting of his own hand into the wound-cavities of the Lord's body would convince him.<sup>2</sup> Again, when he appeared to the five hundred in Galilee "some doubted," even while looking on him.<sup>3</sup> According to the vision theory, or at least according to the only principle on

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 11. <sup>2</sup> John xx. 25. <sup>3</sup> Matt. xxviii. 17.

which the vision theory could find a basis, the disciples would have welcomed these appearances (or visions, if such they were) with the greatest alacrity and joy, and the record would have so represented. Their actions, however, show that they had swung low in the opposite direction.

We have, contrary to the chronological order, reserved the account of the appearances recorded in Luke xxiv. 36-38, to the last: "And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were *terrified and affrighted, and thought they were beholding a spirit*" (ghost). He allayed their fear by asking why they were "*troubled.*" The disciples, by reason of the awful things that had happened, were already in a state of gloom, mixed with terror. They were in no condition to fashion for themselves visions of their Lord, risen and restored to them. They were in a condition most adverse to this. It was a con-

dition far more likely to stimulate the imagination to the creation of images of his dying agonies on the cross, or of his mangled and ghastly corpse. Indeed, it was a condition which, as a matter of fact, went far beyond this in the same direction, and which made them take or mistake *the actual body* of their risen Lord for a ghost! They took that reality which they were *not* expecting, and were in *no condition* to expect, for a *vision* of a ghostly unreality which, *ipso facto*, they *were* in a condition to imagine. This is the record; and it is exactly in accord with observed psychological facts and a well-known psychological law.

But the vision theory involves another consequence which is improbable and unreasonable. We can imagine an individual here and there among men <sup>1</sup> so constituted

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<sup>1</sup> As Mahomet, Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, Swedenborg.



as to fancy in suitable moods that he sees sights. But that a definite number of people, no more and no less, and coinciding exactly with the number of people who happened to be disciples of Jesus, should be thus peculiarly constituted, *and* in particular should each one have the same delusion of seeing the same vision of what had no existence, passes all belief. And yet this is what the vision theory of Strauss would involve.

Just as Strauss himself criticised the swoon theory and showed it to be untenable, so Keim, a semi-naturalistic philosopher, saw objections to the theory of Strauss which led him to its rejection.<sup>1</sup> After Keim disposes of the vision theory of Strauss he proposes a theory of his own: that Christ, resuscitated *in spirit* and glorified, did produce visions of his body in space for the encouragement and assurance of his disciples. This theory goes beyond the limits of nat-

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<sup>1</sup> Keim, vi. 352-358.

uralism, and the author admits that it does. "For the problem," he says, "is such that it baffles science; and history can take cognizance only of the faith of the disciples that the Master was risen, and of the marvelous effect of this faith in the establishment of Christianity. But in order to account for this faith of the disciples and its effect in conquering and renovating the world, *we must suppose*, contrary to the natural order to which science is confined, that God did not let what he had ordained end in death, or hand over the resurrection of Jesus to the uncertain play of subjective visions."<sup>1</sup>

And those who will not accept the fact, dissatisfied themselves with all theories that have been proposed for explaining it away,

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<sup>1</sup> Keim, vi. 360-362. The theory of this masterly mind is referred to here to show the difficulty of accounting for the records and the effects on any other hypothesis than the fact of the resurrection, more than for anything else; to show how stubborn is the evidence for the fact of the resurrection, how hard to dispose of.

are still at work trying to invent new theories. The venerable Dr. Martineau has lately elaborated a new theory to this effect: The apostles were unwilling to believe that Jesus no longer lived. They could not believe that death was the end of an exceptional spirit like his. They had this conviction so strong that in their eagerness to convince others, they went so far as to say they had seen Jesus.<sup>1</sup> But this theory has the weakness of the vision theory and the additional embarrassment of imputing to the apostles prevarication and deception.

The attempt has been made to show that after the disciples had recovered from the first shock of disappointment and grief, they began to reflect on the meaning of the events that had taken place, and on the words of Christ, and that as a result of this process of reflection, it gradually dawned on them that he had risen to "the eternal heavenly

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<sup>1</sup> *Seat of Authority in Religion*, pp. 363-377.

life''; and in this confidence they went forth preaching in his name.<sup>1</sup> In the first place, there was, according to the records, no time for reflection. In three days they had fully recovered and had rebounded to the extreme of assurance and enthusiasm. In the second place, the effect itself showed that what happened to them was not what the slow process of labored reflection would produce. It had the suddenness, the power, and the splendor of a sunburst. And surely nothing less could have produced the unbounded buoyancy which they exhibited in spite of their forlorn condition, or have prompted them to undertake the insane enterprise which, with boundless enthusiasm, they did undertake, and *which they accomplished!*

The evidence for the fact of the physical resurrection of Jesus, apart from *a priori* considerations, is convincing. It has not

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<sup>1</sup> This is the view of Wendt, Teaching of Jesus, ii. 266, ff.

been set aside, though many of the acutest intellects of the ages, from Celsus to Strauss, have taxed their ingenuity in the endeavor to break its force. Still, as Dr. Bruce observes, "All naturalistic attempts to explain away the resurrection, up to this date, have turned out failures. The physical resurrection remains."<sup>1</sup>

And this is true, whether we can discover an adequate reason for the resurrection or not. The historical evidence, direct and indirect, for the fact of the resurrection stands, independent of theological considerations, in spite of philosophical objections. It stands alone. If, however, we can discover the meaning of the resurrection, and find some sufficient reason for it, this will strengthen our confidence in the result of the historical investigation.

What, then, would have been the situation, if Jesus had not risen from the dead? The followers of Jesus were few in num-

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<sup>1</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 397.

ber, they were without power, without prestige, without influence, without learning. In short, they were peasants and women. The world was not friendly to them. Jews and Pagans had combined to destroy their leader, and had succeeded. The forlorn followers of that leader the world did not even pity. It despised them. They, on their part, with the loss of their leader had lost hope and courage, and they cowered before the world and slunk away from its scorn and its hate.

If Jesus had remained among the dead; his followers would have bidden an eternal farewell to their Leader and Lord and to all their hopes. They would have accepted the verdict of fate and of their enemies, that his death was the end-all. They would have had no gospel to preach. The Acts of the Apostles would never have been enacted, and the Gospels would never have been written. Paul would never have been converted, his gospel would never have

been preached, his Epistles would never have been penned. Christianity could never have been established; the renovation of humanity would never have taken place; and the kingdom of God would never have been known. The world would still be rotting with the corpse of Jesus. X

After writing the above, the writer was gratified to find substantially the same view expressed by Keim in his "Jesus of Nazareth." He says:

"All evidences go to prove that the belief in the Messiah would have died out without the living Jesus; and by the return of the apostles to the synagogue and to Judaism, the gold of the words of Jesus would have been buried in the dust of oblivion. The greatest of men would have passed away and left no trace. For a time Galilee would have preserved some truth and some fiction about him; but his cause would have produced no religious exaltation and no Paul.

“The evidence that Jesus was alive was necessary, after an earthly downfall which was so unexampled. The evidence that he was alive was given, by his own impulsion and by the will of God. The Christianity of to-day owes to this evidence, first its Lord, and next its own existence. Thus, though much has fallen away, the secure faith-fortress of the resurrection of Jesus remains.”<sup>1</sup>

In *general*, then, if it was important that Christianity be established in the world, it was important that Christ should rise from the dead.

But in *particular*: We have seen that Christ's death was necessary, if not to his teaching, yet to his redemptive work; and yet his death seemed to be the defeat of his whole mission. And it *would* have been, but for the resurrection. If his death in some way gave validity to his teaching, by

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<sup>1</sup>Jesus of Nazareth, vi. 364, 365.



adding to it an indispensable emphasis, and if it completed his redemptive work, the resurrection gave validity to his death, was the proof not only that his death was not the defeat of his work, but that it was what he had represented it to be. If he had died and not risen again, there would have been no proof that his death *was* what he represented it to be—was different from the death of any other good man. This is substantially what Paul means when he says (Romans iv. 25) that Christ was delivered up to death on account of our offenses and was raised again for our justification. That is, the resurrection furnished the objective basis for faith in the validity and efficacy of his death.

But the resurrection of Jesus has a broader meaning than this. It not only gave validity to his death, it gave validity to, by putting the crowning divine sanction upon, his whole life, his character, his teachings, his work, his unique claims.

This is substantially summed up by Paul in what he says in his introduction to Romans (i. 1-4). The words "according to the spirit of holiness" do not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to Jesus' own spirit, and stand in antithesis to the words "according to the flesh"; and they mean that Jesus, though a partaker of human flesh, was free from the moral taint universally associated with the flesh—he was sinless. So far, then, Jesus was one with God, and Paul in this passage ascribes to him a divine sonship involving at least ethical identity with God. In accordance with this fact of his inner being, Jesus, by the resurrection, was (not "appointed" nor "constituted," but) marked out as *being* the Son of God. The resurrection supplied the visible, objective demonstration, manifested in power, of the essential fact of Christ's inner nature and being. He was by the resurrection marked out as being the Son of God, as all through his earthly ministry he expressed the con-

sciousness of being. The resurrection demonstrated this with power, and is the proof beyond peradventure that (whether or not we believe God did in time past speak unto the fathers by the prophets) he certainly has, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son.

The resurrection of Jesus becomes also the proof of immortality. If the fact has been established, it and it alone answers the question, "Does death end all?" As Keim says, "The hope of immortality, which ran through mankind as a contradicted sign, has become a bright light and a clear truth through him alone; spiritually, through his word, and *visibly* through his act. He has dissipated anxious dread by showing the firm ground of a heavenly future for the children of God."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus of Nazareth, vi. 365.

## Summary and Conclusion.

WE have now seen that Jesus was the revealer to men of the knowledge of God and of man in his relation to God. This is one thing, and it is unique. That he possessed the character and lived the life he did is another thing, and unique. That he had the self-consciousness which he expressed in the manifold forms we have studied is yet another thing, and unparalleled among men. He suffered a passion and died a death the like of which was never known. He was raised from the dead. He introduced a moral revolution on earth and renovated the decaying world—a fact that has been the problem and the study of the ages since his death.

That all these separate facts should combine in one and the same person, the untaught peasant-artisan of Galilee, constitutes a miracle in the true and proper sense, a miracle that so far transcends all the mir-

acles he is said to have wrought, as to make them easy of belief. Though there is much that we cannot explain, we are constrained to confess that Jesus is the Son of God, to accept him, in his own profound and comprehensive though undefined sense, as the Son of man and brother to humanity, and to ask continually his grace that we may enthrone him as King in our hearts and obey him as Lord over our lives.

THE END.



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